



QUICK FACTS & FAQs

SUSTAINING INDIANA'S BEACHES

BACKGROUND

The scenic beaches of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and State Park draw more than 3.6 million people from around the world to Indiana—they are the most visited place in the state and the seventh most visited national park area in the nation. The beaches serve as the cornerstone of a tourism economy that generates millions of dollars in economic impacts, supports thousands of jobs, and provide millions of dollars 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. Two local communities have already pledged funds towards the 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 Lakeshore and State Park are economic drivers for the state of Indiana and assets for the quality of life of Indiana residents.

* Indiana Dunes Tourism
2017 Economic Impact Study

3.6 million visitors annually

5,500 jobs supported

\$475 million in economic impact

\$111 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, the most visited site within Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, 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 \$475 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 \$1.6 million 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

High water levels, waves eating away at Lake Michigan shore
— *NW Indiana Times*, July 11, 2015

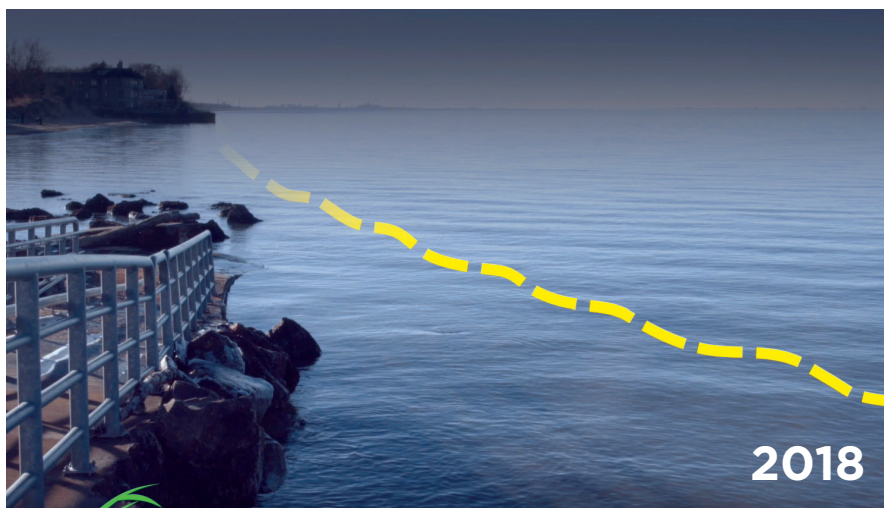
Research: Lake Michigan shore erosion could be accelerating
— *Associated Press*, June 3, 2017

Observation Deck in Indiana for Lake Michigan Collapses
— *US News & World Report*, January 15, 2018

Erosion closes Portage beach access at Indiana Dunes
— *Associated Press*, November 3, 2018



2011



2018

For more information on Indiana's beach erosion, please contact Colin Deverell at cdeverell@npca.org or Tim Smith at tim_smith@mpaginc.com.

