



A Day at the Dunes with the GSC and IGS

September 8, 2018

Itinerary

9:00 a.m.--Arrive at Douglas Education Center of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore – (use own transportation). The Douglas Center is located at 100 North Lake Street, Gary, IN 46403, (219) 395-1821

9:00-9:30 a.m.--We will have an introduction to the National Lakeshore through a film presentation at the Center.

9:30-10:40 a.m.--The group will tour the Douglas Education Center and its exhibits and walk around pond and back of building.

10:45-11:00 a.m.--Car Caravan Drive to West Beach Unit of National Lakeshore.

11:00-12:30 a.m.--Hike the West Beach Succession Trail with Park Ranger

1.0 mile in length, 81 feet of elevation gain, 3% average grade, 15% maximum grade Be aware that there are quite a few stairs on this trail. Average hike time: 45 minutes

The Dune Succession Trail (Loop 1) highlights the four stages of dune development within its one-mile length. From the parking lot, follow the road north, toward the lake and look for the trail to pick up to the west of the bathhouse. This scenic, but strenuous, trail includes a climb up 250 stairs for a spectacular view of Lake Michigan and Chicago. You'll start on a bare sand beach and end in an oak forest, tracing a process in nature that took thousands of years. The process, called succession, involves a group of plants and animals in a particular place gradually being replaced over time by other, very different ones. The concept of succession was introduced by Dr. Henry Chandler Cowles after he visited the dunes, and now the dunes is known as ecology's birthplace.

12:30 p.m.-1:45 p.m.--Lunch - We will be eating outdoors picnic-style. You have the option of bringing your own sack lunch or purchasing from a nearby food truck (weather-permitting). Pizza will be available from The Rolling Stonebaker, <https://therollingstonebaker.com/visit>. In the event of inclement weather, alternative arrangements will be made.

1:45- 2:30--Car Caravan Drive to Pinhook Bog Unit

2:30 to 3:30-- Pinhook Bog tour (Restricted Access) with Park Ranger

0.9 miles in length, 44 feet of elevation gain, 2% average grade, 6% maximum grade

Average hiking time: 1 hour

This featured hike is an out and back trail. Starting at the parking lot trailhead, take the trail south as it winds downhill through the forest. At the edge of the bog the trail continues out onto floating boardwalk. Bogs like Pinhook are relics of our glacial past. Trapped in the pulverized clay and rock left behind by a melting glacier, the bog began as a kettle lake. Cut off from ground water, Pinhook's water gradually became acidic. Sphagnum moss, tolerant of acidic waters, formed floating mats that eventually supported carnivorous plants like pitcher plants and sundew, orchids like pink lady's slipper and ferns. Over time, blueberry and holly shrubs colonized this unique acidic bog, eventually giving way to larger trees like tamarack and red maple. Pinhook Bog is on the National Natural Landmark list.

3:30 p.m. Depart for Chicago or spend some time exploring on your own.

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