

# INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

## Business Plan

Who we are

What we do

The challenges we face

FY 2001

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## Strategic Priorities

Increased Congressional appropriations are only one method of reducing the gap between what is required and what is currently available at the National Lakeshore. Alternative and creative methods of improving the National Lakeshore's ability to meet its operational deficits are required. A variety of financial and non-financial strategies are currently employed, yet more strategic planning must be done to ensure that the National Lakeshore can achieve its goals. Current efficiencies and cost savings are discussed in this document, as well as opportunities to increase operational efficiency, build additional capacity, expand partnership opportunities, increase volunteerism, increase revenue from fee collections, and attract additional quality staff beyond current methods.



Park Docent Ramona Ambrozich leading education program.



Chesterton High School Environmental Education Classes led by teacher Bill Schaudt

	REQUIRED RESOURCES		RESOURCES AVAILABLE		DEFICIT (SURPLUS)	
	FTE	\$	FTE Available	Total	FTE	\$
<b>FACILITY OPERATIONS</b>						
Buildings Operations	3.30	\$ 141,671	0.80	\$ 42,574	2.50	\$ 99,098
Buildings Operations: Historic Structures Operations	1.66	\$ 58,549	0.60	\$ 19,438	1.06	\$ 39,503
Campground Operations	2.20	\$ 88,834	2.79	\$ 104,475	-0.59	\$ (15,640)
Facility Operations Management and Administration	2.75	\$ 197,171	2.34	\$ 147,863	0.41	\$ 49,308
Grounds Operations	7.96	\$ 362,513	6.17	\$ 266,754	1.79	\$ 95,759
Janitorial Operations	5.76	\$ 251,844	5.47	\$ 202,447	0.29	\$ 49,396
Roads Operations	4.20	\$ 246,117	2.84	\$ 160,559	1.36	\$ 85,558
Trails Operations	3.00	\$ 149,738	0.80	\$ 37,750	2.20	\$ 111,988
Transportation Systems Operations	2.40	\$ 272,386	1.65	\$ 162,249	0.75	\$ 110,138
Utility Operations	5.58	\$ 365,462	3.36	\$ 216,881	2.22	\$ 148,581
	<b>38.81</b>	<b>\$2,134,287</b>	<b>26.82</b>	<b>\$1,360,990</b>	<b>11.99</b>	<b>\$773,691</b>
<b>MAINTENANCE</b>						
Buildings Maintenance	4.15	\$ 308,021	0.92	\$ 79,650	3.23	\$ 228,371
Buildings Maintenance: Historic Structures Maintenance	2.63	\$ 273,341	2.56	\$ 298,527	0.07	\$ (25,186)
Fleet Maintenance	0.60	\$ 79,413	0.50	\$ 56,747	0.10	\$ 22,666
Maintenance Management and Administration	2.23	\$ 370,998	1.42	\$ 108,784	0.81	\$ 262,214
Maintenance Management and Administration: Maintenance Planning	2.53	\$ 106,031	2.08	\$ 202,357	0.45	\$ (96,326)
Roads Maintenance	1.45	\$ 212,191	0.70	\$ 101,126	0.75	\$ 111,064
Trails Maintenance	2.48	\$ 310,730	2.17	\$ 293,330	0.31	\$ 17,400
Utility Maintenance	6.11	\$ 537,480	4.43	\$ 425,762	1.68	\$ 111,719
<b>Total Maintenance</b>	<b>22.18</b>	<b>\$2,198,205</b>	<b>14.79</b>	<b>\$1,566,282</b>	<b>7.39</b>	<b>\$631,922</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION</b>						
Communications: IT, Telephone and Mail	3.68	\$ 333,462	2.97	\$ 220,051	0.71	\$ 113,410
Communications: Radio and Dispatch	7.41	\$ 219,536	7.49	\$ 188,302	-0.08	\$ 31,234
External Affairs: Domestic	3.21	\$ 239,010	1.68	\$ 110,329	1.53	\$ 128,681
External Affairs: International	0.15	\$ 14,360	0.14	\$ 18,859	0.02	\$ (4,499)
Financial Management	3.42	\$ 200,673	2.02	\$ 122,492	1.40	\$ 78,181
General Administration: Contracts/Procurement	3.61	\$ 202,359	2.91	\$ 170,602	0.70	\$ 31,757
General Administration: Volunteers in Parks	0.48	\$ 27,432	0.32	\$ 27,099	0.16	\$ 11,215
General Management: Human Resources	4.00	\$ 285,019	2.59	\$ 170,838	1.42	\$ 114,181
General Management: Park Leadership	4.53	\$ 390,752	2.93	\$ 241,439	1.60	\$ 149,313
General Management: Reservations of Use	1.85	\$ 139,151	1.93	\$ 143,781	-0.07	\$ (4,630)
Parkwide Safety	0.98	\$ 74,196	0.50	\$ 40,000	0.48	\$ 34,195
Planning	1.76	\$ 174,448	1.64	\$ 139,783	0.11	\$ 34,665
<b>Total Management and Administration</b>	<b>35.10</b>	<b>\$2,300,398</b>	<b>27.13</b>	<b>\$1,593,576</b>	<b>7.97</b>	<b>\$717,704</b>
<b>RESOURCE PROTECTION</b>						
Cultural Resource Management: Architectural	2.45	\$ 173,274	0.99	\$ 57,612	1.46	\$ 115,662
Cultural Resource Management: Historical	3.28	\$ 193,067	1.25	\$ 71,878	2.02	\$ 121,190
Information Integration and Analysis	1.23	\$ 70,450	1.07	\$ 63,973	0.16	\$ 6,477
Natural Resource Management: Environmental Monitoring	1.71	\$ 83,379	1.41	\$ 61,106	0.31	\$ 22,273
Natural Resource Management: Fire Management	26.09	\$ 1,298,260	10.37	\$ 497,797	15.72	\$ 800,463
Natural Resource Management: Restoration/Vegetation Management	11.47	\$ 558,282	3.46	\$ 261,235	8.01	\$ 443,722
Natural Resource Management: Wildlife	3.48	\$ 201,789	1.64	\$ 95,692	1.84	\$ 106,097
Resource Protection Management and Administration	10.49	\$ 689,348	4.65	\$ 230,172	5.85	\$ 459,177
<b>Resource Protection Total</b>	<b>60.22</b>	<b>\$3,267,850</b>	<b>24.85</b>	<b>\$1,339,465</b>	<b>35.37</b>	<b>\$2,075,061</b>
<b>VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND ENJOYMENT</b>						
Concessions Management	0.04	\$ 3,326	0.03	\$ 1,146	0.01	\$ 2,180
Cooperating Association Coordination	0.63	\$ 24,167	0.28	\$ 14,139	0.34	\$ 10,028
Environmental Education	9.15	\$ 803,076	7.30	\$ 519,513	1.85	\$ 283,564
Fee Collection	5.04	\$ 184,303	2.83	\$ 103,142	2.21	\$ 81,161
Interpretation: Interpretive Media	1.70	\$ 133,998	0.57	\$ 44,585	1.13	\$ 89,413
Interpretation: Interpretive Programs	5.48	\$ 259,158	5.22	\$ 203,652	0.26	\$ 55,508
VEE Management and Administration: Interpretation	5.28	\$ 305,948	4.42	\$ 290,539	0.86	\$ 15,408
VEE Management and Administration: Visitor Protection	4.41	\$ 289,746	4.59	\$ 254,497	-0.18	\$ 35,249
Visitor Center Operations	6.34	\$ 244,293	5.27	\$ 220,326	1.06	\$ 23,766
Visitor Safety Services	10.80	\$ 1,632,934	10.79	\$ 1,217,666	2.77	\$ 415,134
<b>Total Visitor Experience and Enjoyment</b>	<b>57.57</b>	<b>\$3,880,950</b>	<b>47.24</b>	<b>\$2,869,238</b>	<b>10.33</b>	<b>\$1,011,712</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>213.87</b>	<b>\$13,781,689</b>	<b>140.82</b>	<b>\$8,729,552</b>	<b>73.05</b>	<b>\$5,210,090</b>
<b>OFS INCREASE FY2000 to FY2001 (after regional adjustments)</b>					<b>\$182,900</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVE FY2001 DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)</b>					<b>\$5,027,190</b>	

Note: Basis of Accounting

This financial statement has been prepared from the books and records of the National Park Service in accordance with NPS accounting policies. The resources available reflect the total operations and maintenance costs incurred by the park during the fiscal year 2000. The resources required are intended to represent the funding needed to operate the park while fully meeting park defined operational standards. Program requirements are presented as a planning tool based on fiscal year 2001 salary and wage tables. Non-labor operating costs were determined as a percentage of salary costs. One-time projects and capital improvements (e.g. investments) will have a resulting impact on the operational requirements presented.

Yellow shaded area under fire management indicates a funding increase in FY 2001 of 7.1 FTE and \$496,470.

# Park Overview



**Cultural Resources:**

- 204 Archaeological Sites
- 6 Historical Trails
- 66,596 Museum Collection Items
- 56 Historical Buildings
- 5 Cultural Landscapes
- 12 Historic Railroad Beds
- 18 Historic Railroad Cars

**Roads and Trails:**

- 60.45 Lane-Miles of Paved Roads
- 0.46 Lane-Miles of Unpaved Secondary Roads
- 19 Paved Parking Areas and Scenic Viewpoints
- 17 Unpaved Parking Areas and Scenic Viewpoints
- 15,000 Linear-Feet of Boardwalk
- 45 Miles of Trails

**Utilities:**

- 12 Remote Comfort Stations
- 30 Water Systems, Septic Tank Treatment Systems
- 11 Picnic Areas
- 2 Fuel Storage Systems
- 1 Campground with RV Parking and Tent Pads
- 13 Lift Stations

**Buildings:**



# Park History

The legislation that authorized Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in 1966 resulted from a movement that began in 1899. Three key individuals helped make Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore a reality: Henry Cowles, a botanist from the University of Chicago; Paul H. Douglas, Senator for the State of Illinois; and Dorothy R. Buell, an Ogden Dunes resident and English teacher. Henry Cowles published an article entitled "Ecological Relations of the Vegetation on Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan," in the *Botanical Gazette* in 1899 that established Cowles as the "father of plant ecology" in North America and brought international attention to the intricate ecosystems existing on the dunes.

But Cowles' article and the new international awareness were not enough to curtail the struggle between industry and preservation that governed the development of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. In 1916, the region was booming with industry in the form of steel mills and power plants. Hoosier Slide, for example, 200 feet in height, was the largest sand dune on Indiana's lakeshore. During the first twenty years of the battle to save the dunes, the Ball Brothers of Muncie, Indiana, manufacturers of glass fruit jars, and the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company of Kokomo carried Hoosier Slide away in railroad boxcars.

It was this kind of activity by local industry that spurred Cowles, along with Thomas W. Allinson and Jens Jensen to form the Prairie Club of Chicago in 1908. The Prairie Club was the first group to propose that a portion of the Indiana Dunes be protected from commercial interests and maintained in its pristine condition for the enjoyment of the people. Out of the Prairie Club of Chicago came the precursor to the current park: The National Dunes Park Association (NDPA). The NDPA promoted the theme: "A National Park for the Middle West, and all the Middle West for a National Park."

On October 30, 1916, only one month after the





# Park Map

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is located in northwest Indiana, approximately 50 miles southeast of Chicago. The park's proximity to the third largest metropolitan area in the U.S. puts it in a unique position. The park does not experience the easy access and visibility of a park within a city's borders, but it does serve an annual average of 1,840,000 visitors from the greater Chicago area, an area that ranges from the Wisconsin–Illinois state line around the southern tip of Lake Michigan to the Indiana–Michigan state line and includes eight-million people. Because the lakeshore is located in Indiana, foundations in the state of Illinois are reluctant donors. However, because the park serves many visitors from the Chicago area, foundations in Indiana can be reluctant as well.



# Historic Funding Analysis

The base budget for Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore appears to have increased by 135% from 1980 to 2000 (from \$2,876,000 to \$6,751,000). However, adjusting those actual dollars for inflation shows that in the past 20 years Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore has realized an effective increase in base budget of only 12.3% (from \$2,876,000 to \$3,230,000 in 1980 dollars). As illustrated in the graph below, for half of those years, including all of the years 1990-1996, the adjusted base budget was effectively less than in 1980.

Meanwhile, the National Lakeshore's acreage has continued to grow even as the operating budget stagnated over the past two decades, increasing by 17% from 12,535 to 15,100 acres. Increased acreage





# Cost Drivers

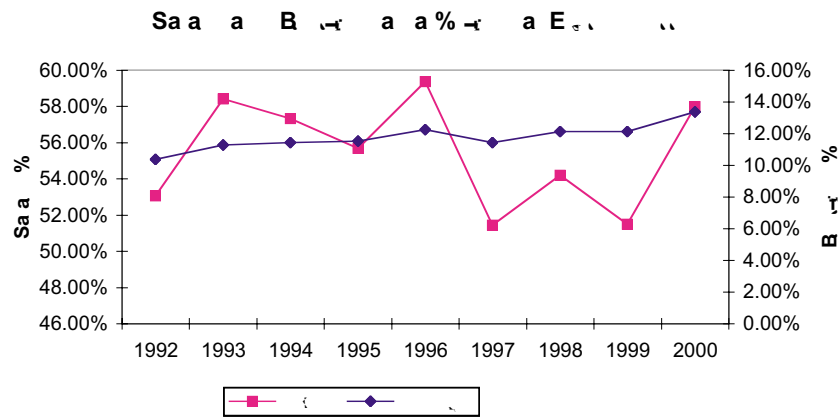
## Congressional and National Park Service Mandates

As illustrated in the graph below, payroll benefits expenditures have been increasing at a greater rate than salaries. These increasing personnel costs are due in large part to actions taken by Congress and the National Park Service over the last decade. A more in-depth description of these mandates can be found below:

### 1. Retirement Plan Conversion

The retirement plan for federal employees was converted from the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) so that all employees new to the park service in 1980 or later became part of the FERS system.

Approximately 15-20% of a CSRS employee's salary is contributed toward retirement, in contrast to 25-50% for a FERS employee. Therefore, as CSRS employees leave the park and are replaced by FERS employees, benefits costs increase. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of CSRS employees declined by 63% (53 to 23) as the permanent staff increased by 50% (86 to 123). The resulting increase in benefit cost for the National Lakeshore was 72% for the ten-year period 1990-2000.



### 2. Professionalization Initiatives

Staff professionalization programs have been instituted in the National Park Service as compensation for employees for their increased levels of responsibility and complexity. For example, Rangers Careers was begun in the early 1990s to add more resource protection and law enforcement responsibilities for ranger positions. Grade levels and salaries for law enforcement rangers increased. Necessarily, supervisor grade levels and salaries also increased.

As a result of the Ranger professionalization, a plan called the 6C Retirement Program was instituted at the same time as the Rangers Careers to reduce the required service time to full retirement from 30 years to 20 years for firefighters and law enforcement rangers. The park's base budget increased sharply in 1996 in partial support for these three initiatives to meet the directed mandates. Resource, information technology, and engineer careers also were professionalized in fiscal year 2000, but with no supporting budget increases. A base

increase to the park's budget in 1996 only partially met the financial demand that these programs created.

### ***3. National Park Service Reorganization***

In the mid 1990s, several national and regional financial and human resource responsibilities were delegated to the park, otherwise known as the field level. To handle this increased load, the National Lakeshore park administrative staff has grown from 11 to 13 over the past five years, although no budget increases were received to support this reorganization. Due to increased responsibilities, administrative grades have increased an average of \$2,300 per position, also driving costs upward. The National Lakeshore administrative staff provides contracting support to seven other park sites.

As a result of these increasing financial demands, the National Lakeshore continues to consider outsourcing opportunities as a means to control personnel expenditures. Two major aspects must be considered, however: In-park project management needs associated with outsourcing and the possibility that in terms of total resource expenditure, the activity may be performed more cost-effectively by National Lakeshore staff.



# Visitor Experience and Enjoyment

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore receives more than 1,840,000 visitors per year. Whether they come to enjoy the beach, participate in formal interpretive programs to learn about the bogs and dunes, or visit the historic Chellberg farm, their experience is enhanced through the level of safety and services provided by the National Lakeshore.

## Visitor Safety Services

Visitor Safety Services expenditures comprised over 42% of the \$2.87 million spent on Visitor Experience and Enjoyment in fiscal year 2000, yet still remains the program with the highest deficit within Visitor Experience and Enjoyment (42% when stated as a percentage of available dollars). The visitor safety

services provided include search and rescue, investigations, and patrols of park boundaries and high traffic areas. One such area is Dunewood Campground; the campground has become a persistent source of incidents requiring a law enforcement presence.

The visitor protection division also coordinates community programs such as the Water Safety Exposition and Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (DARE). The challenges facing Visitor Safety



Services at National Lakeshore involve the uneven and complex boundaries of the park. Boundaries stretch over 15,000 acres, surrounding the 2,182 acres of the Indiana Dunes State Park, managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and involving co-jurisdictional areas with bordering communities. High levels of trespasses and crimes follow from the high level of visitation. Forty-eight felonies and 974 misdemeanors were investigated at the National Lakeshore in fiscal year 2000.

## Visitor Experience and Enjoyment Programs

- Interpretation
  - Interpretive Media
  - Interpretive Programs
- Environmental Education
- Cooperating Association Coordination
- Fee Collection
- Concessions
- Visitor Safety Services
- Management and Administration
  - Interpretation Mgt & Admin
  - Visitor Protection Mgt & Admin

## Fee Collection

Groups desiring to use the park for special purposes must apply for a permit and are assessed a fee to cover the cost of processing and monitoring, or other services necessary for the activity.

A deficit of \$81,161 in fiscal year 2000 exists in the special-use fee collections program at National Lakeshore. The park plans to reassess the current nominal fee charge for special use permits to ensure that it adequately covers the cost of services provided.

## Interpretation and Education

Interpretation and Education services comprised nearly 37% of Visitor Experience and Enjoyment expenditures in fiscal year 2000. Interpretation is provided through formal interpretive programs as well as informal roving interpretation on the beaches and trails, environmental education, and off-site education programs. Investment in a report on historic furnishings and implementation of its findings would enhance the Chellberg Farm operation.

Interpretive waysides and accompanying brochures provide information about the historic and natural resources, what visitors can do to protect them, and precautions visitors should take to avoid potential hazards. Additional investment is needed in new and replacement waysides to support this operation.

A visitor center and contact station with bookstore are also operated in conjunction with Eastern National, a cooperating association. Volunteers cover many of the interpretive operations; the interpretation division logged 11,517 hours of volunteer time in fiscal year 2000.

In partnership with the Porter County Convention, Recreation and Visitor Commission, the park is planning a new, jointly-operated visitor center that is expected to open in the spring of 2003. Construction of the facility is through grants obtained by the Commission. The National Lakeshore is seeking additional funding to cover lease and interior exhibit costs.



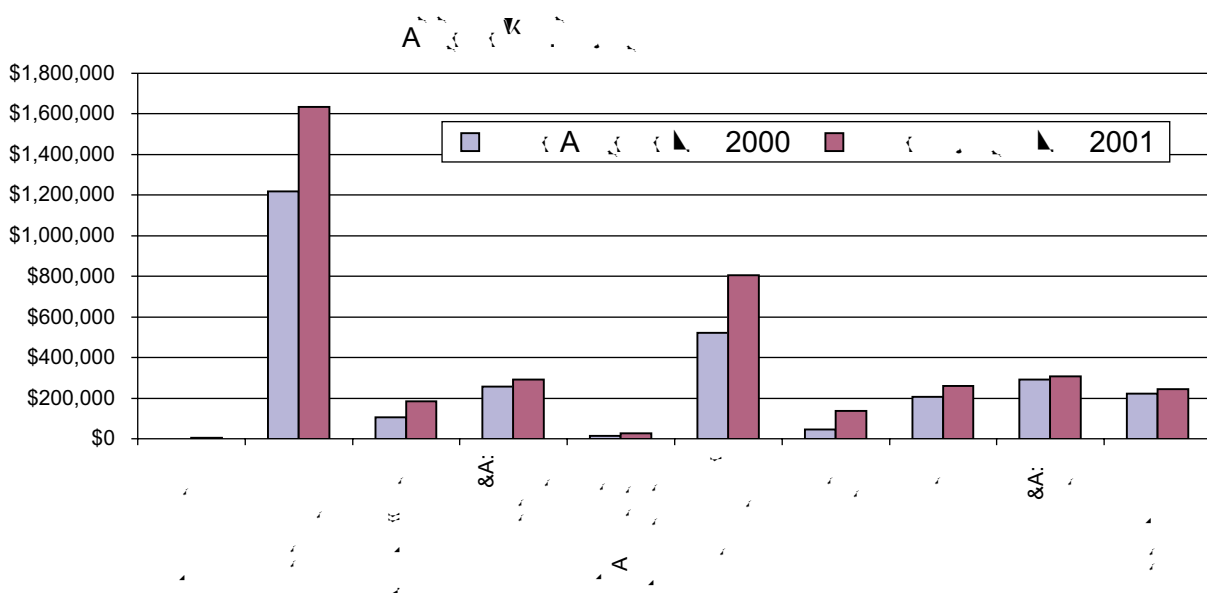
Environmental Education represents the second highest deficit in the Visitor Experience and Enjoyment functional area. Approximately 40,000 children attend park education programs each year. While these programs are presented at locations throughout the entire park, the greatest concentration of programs occurs at the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education or at the Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center.

Partnerships are critical to the success of programs at both locations. Education programs at the Learning Center, a residential facility, are developed and presented in a partnership between the National Park Service and the private, non-profit Learning Center. The facilities, while owned by the NPS and located within the National Lakeshore, are operated by the Learning Center's professional staff and student interns. At the Paul H. Douglas Center, programs are presented by both NPS staff and education staff from another partner organization, the Lake County Solid Waste Management District.



In FY 2000, expenditures for Visitor Experience and Enjoyment totaled \$3,869,238, and 47.24 full-time equivalency (FTE) staff were used. These amounts represent 33% of the park's expenditures that year. For the programs in this functional area to operate at a satisfactory level and meet

National Park Service operational standards, an additional 10.33 FTE and \$1,011,712 would be necessary. Environmental Education and Visitor Safety Services are priority targets for additional funding. Together they represent nearly 45% of the total need for Visitor Experience and Enjoyment that remains unfunded.



# Maintenance

Maintenance activities are designed to protect and prolong the life of park assets. These assets include capital improvements via major repairs to equipment, facilities, or structures, as well as construction of new park assets. Some of the assets that are maintained through this program include 215 vehicles, 103 buildings, 45 miles of trails, and 36 parking areas. A comprehensive list of lakeshore physical assets and infrastructure can be found in the park inventory portion of this document.

Maintenance activities at the National Lakeshore ensure that all operations meet and comply with U.S. public health codes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Indiana Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency regulations, and any other applicable federal, state, and local regulations. In addition, all activities conform to NPS regulations and Director's Orders. Such activities include cyclic repairs, restoration of modern and historic structures, and maintenance of water treatment systems throughout the National Lakeshore.

Future park roads and parking lot expansion and development will connect hiking and biking trail systems, align existing park roads with new ones, provide access to parking lots, and coordinate new site development. The National Lakeshore General Management Plan (GMP) identifies future acquisition of Highway 12 from the east

In fiscal year 2000, maintenance expenditures totaled approximately \$1,566,282 and labor consisted of 14.79 FTE. Expenditures and labor were allocated to each of the eight programs in the maintenance functional area. Three maintenance programs now under-funded include

### Utility Maintenance

The utilities maintenance program entails on-going activities to maintain and upgrade major utility systems that support National Lakeshore infrastructure and critical services such as electrical systems, lighting systems, water and wastewater systems, fire suppression systems, heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems, and technological improvements. All utilities maintenance is performed in accordance with all applicable federal and state regulations.

The utilities maintenance program operates with a 1.68 FTE and \$111,719 funding shortfall. Daily



# Management and Administration

The Management and Administration program provides leadership and support in order for the park to operate as efficiently as possible and according to its mission. The location of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in a highly developed area generates the need for extensive communication and partnerships with the public regarding controversial issues, including air and water quality issues, deer management, and land use, such as the Reservation of Use program. The park staff and leadership work closely with local, state and federal agencies and activist groups, including 11 separate municipalities, three county governments, regional and state organizations, and federal environmental, transportation and regulatory offices.

## Management and Administration Programs

- General Management
- Park Leadership
- Human Resources

### Park Leadership and External Affairs

The National Park Service is viewed as a leader in environmental issues. The location of the National Lakeshore necessitates monitoring and communicating environmental issues.

The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore surrounds the Indiana Dunes State Park, which creates extensive inter-workings between the two organizations. The park's jagged boundaries and co-jurisdictions with the state park and abutting communities can cause confusion. Developing and maintaining the National Lakeshore's identity and partnerships are vital, both in terms of protecting the park's resources and in securing funding. Many visitors use the park as strictly a recreational area and do not understand or respect the delicate ecosystems that need protection. Partnership efforts and the National Lakeshore's presence at community events and activist meetings can lead to better education and response to issues such as air and water quality, resource protection, the impact of the park on the local community, and precautionary actions regarding fire suppression and water hazards.

### International Affairs

The National Lakeshore has a "Sister Park", Kampinoski National Park, in Poland. A Memorandum of Cooperation established the Sister Park relationship on April 15, 1998. At the same time an Understanding between the NPS and the Board of Polish National Parks was also signed. Both parks have similar challenges in addressing location within close proximity of a large metropolitan area, exotic species control, dune formations, and hydrological issues. Both parks have exchanged representatives to work together

in mutually beneficial areas of environmental education, science, and natural resources management.

**General Management and Administration and Communication**

The National Lakeshore operates as a servicing center, providing human resource and contracting support to several other parks in the region. Human resource services are provided for 125 full-time employees, in addition to part-time and seasonal workers. The communications group provides 24-hour central



# Resource Protection

Resource protection includes management of natural and cultural resources, information integration and

## Invasive Species Control

Invasive, non-native plant species transplanted into home sites for landscaping and agricultural purposes



paid structural fire departments serve the National Lakeshore, the nearest cadre of trained and specially equipped wildland firefighters is hours away. Due to the urban nature of the region there are few blocks of woodlands that need wildland fire protection. Natural areas with this type of expertise are in the southern part of Indiana, Northern Wisconsin, and Michigan. Park fire staff members also actively support similar efforts on a local, regional and national level. The park fire team is mobile and ready to respond on both a local, regional, or national level to assist other areas in their fire suppression operations.

Recent stricter standards regarding fire activities in national parks have led to a great need in the park for additional fire staff – either collateral duty or full-time. The \$800,463 and 15.72 FTE underfunded needs for fire management represent 15% of the park-wide dollar deficit and 22% of the - park-wide FTE deficit. Although the fire activities are integral to park

### **Resource Protection Management and Administration**

The resource management division spends considerable time compiling data and proposals to pursue grant funding. In addition, Student Conservation Association and Youth Conservation Corps workers help with National Lakeshore operations each year and foster park stewardship in the surrounding communities.

Resource Protection alone represents 39.8% of the entire park deficit, although it comprised only 15.3% of park expenditures in fiscal year 2000. Funding is difficult to obtain because the results of resource management are difficult to measure, often invisible to the visiting public, and results are often achieved over years of incremental improvements.

# Facility Operations

Facility Operations activities at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore are performed by the maintenance division. Facility operations entail the day-to-day preservation and minor repairs involved with protecting natural and cultural resources. National Lakeshore facilities include a visitor center, learning center, campground, 56 historic structures, 103 buildings and structures, 45 miles of trails, and 60.45 paved miles of roads.

Facility operations ensure that all historic structures, buildings, trails, and roads are in a safe and functional state for staff and visitor use. This involves daily monitoring and minor repairs.

## Facility Operations Programs

- Campground Operations
- Fleet and Transportation Operations
- Ground Operations
- Buildings Operations
  - Historical Structures Operations
- Janitorial Operations
- Roads Operations
- Facility Operations Management and Administration
- Trails Operations
- Utilities Operations

In fiscal year 2000, facility operations expenditures totaled approximately \$1,360,990, and labor consisted of 26.82 FTE. Expenditures and labor were allocated to each of the ten programs in facility operations. Three facility operations programs that are greatly under-funded are buildings operations (70% under-funded), trails operations (75% under-funded), and utility operations (41% under-funded).



The National Lakeshore needs an additional 11.99 FTE and \$773,691 across all ten facility operations programs in order to maintain facility and infrastructure integrity and avoid premature, unnecessary, and costly maintenance activities. The park continues to grow and develop; facility operations programs also require proportionate additional funding.

## Buildings Operations

This program provides for safe and functional structures. However, due to a 2.5 FTE and \$125,098 shortfall, the National Lakeshore will not be able to service adequately each facility daily to avoid costly, unnecessary, or premature major repairs.

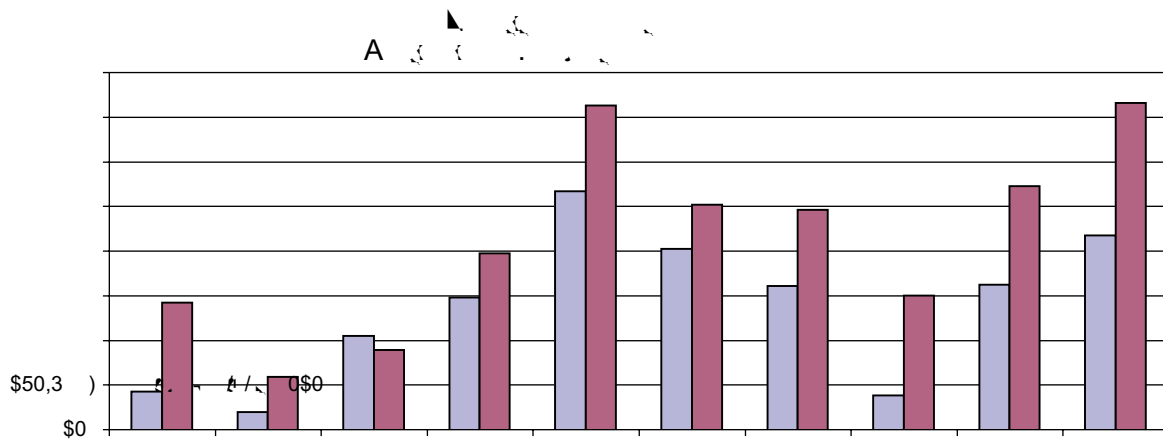
## Trails Operations

Through this program National Lakeshore trails are inspected to minimize damage both to the trails and surrounding wildlife and vegetation. Trails, boardwalks, steps, water bars, drainage structures, and trail bridges are repaired in order to provide safe passage for visitors. Trails are kept in good functional order by maintaining program bulletin boards, trailhead kiosks, bollards, gate trail markers, trimming back vegetation and overhead branches, removing debris, and collecting litter. Due to a 2.2 FTE and \$111,988 funding shortfall, the National Lakeshore cannot properly patrol and maintain the 45 miles of trails that currently exist.



## Utility Operations

Utility operations deals with daily functions of all major utility systems within the National Lakeshore. These include electrical distribution panels, lighting, fire suppression, heating, ventilating, and air conditioning, and 21 water and wastewater systems. All utility systems throughout the National Lakeshore should be inspected and monitored regularly to identify necessary repairs. However, due to a 2.22 FTE and \$148,581 funding shortfall, the National Lakeshore has been unable to adhere to a regular schedule. The relationship between this and the buildings operations programs exemplifies the lack of adequate funding, resulting in major repairs or reconstruction.





# GPR Analysis

people, preferences, and opportunities







4. Restoration of Wetland Hydrology

Unfunded Cost: \$832,000



(see Investment Need #1). Phase II would extend the water main to the park headquarters facilities, Bailly Visitor Contact Station, Bailly Picnic area restrooms, and the historic Chellberg Farm district. The total Phase I and Phase II water main extension exceeds 2.7 miles and would provide fire suppression as well as potable water for 21 historic buildings and 14 buildings used for administrative and support purposes.

9. Ev

The first cluster of cabins has been constructed. The next two phases will build a second cluster of historic buildings and an environmental education building. As part of the fourth phase, the main lodge, which is a National Register Property, will be restored and transformed for modern use, without destroying the lodge's historic character.

Camp operations are expected to become self-sustaining, and the project provides potential for additional funding through contributions from its partners. The project will improve local community and corporate partnerships and create a constituency of local entities supportive of the park mission.

# Financial Strategies

The Business Plan Initiative has documented a \$5,210,090 shortfall in the operational budget of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and a \$63,672,371 Project Management Information System backlog. The \$5.2M operational deficit does not consider money that has since been received by the National Lakeshore for approximately 15 new fire personnel that were hired in fiscal year 2001.

Seeking increased Congressional appropriations is only one method of reducing the gap between funds currently available and funding that the National Lakeshore needs. Alternative, creative methods of improving the park's ability to meet its mission and operational standards are needed. A variety of financial and non-financial strategies appears below. Several represent actions already taken by the park to supplement its base budget, while others are forward-thinking strategies that could aid the park's financial situation in both the short and long term. The wide array of strategies represent the National Lakeshore's intention to increase operational efficiency, build additional capacity, expand partnership opportunities, increase volunteerism, increase revenue from fee collections, and attract additional quality staff.

## Personnel and Resource Reallocation

- To meet part of the patrol deficit in the visitor protection division, the park has begun augmenting staff lifeguards using visitor assistants with lifeguard skills. These assistants roam the beaches educating swimmers on the dangers of Lake Michigan and monitoring activities, thus increasing the uniformed staff presence in the park while ensuring visitor safety.
- To meet a deficit in computer support, several park staff are being collaterally trained to provide common computer support for their divisions.

## Partnerships

- Increase fundraising capabilities through partnership fundraising efforts;
- Expand existing participation in programs such as the Student Conservation Association, Youth Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, and others that team youth with conservation-related project needs.

## Fee Collection

- Lengthen fee collection seasons at sites where fees are collected and ensure that user fees for recreational activities support facility operations at those locations;
- Explore fee levels as they relate to actual costs for Special-Use Permits.

## Additional Financial Strategies

- Aggressively pursue grant funding for less-than-permanent FTE shortfalls;
- Consider innovative programs such as state license plate sales for revenue enhancement;



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Kristy Lehmann  
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Dale Engquist

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Garry Traynham  
Assistant Superintendent, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

Christopher Light  
Administrative Officer, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

Bruce Rowe

For more information about the National Park Business Plan Initiative please contact:

Tom Dale  
NPS Accounting Operations Center  
2180 Fox Mill Road, Suite 201  
Herndon, VA 12171  
e-mail: [Tom\\_Dale@nps.gov](mailto:Tom_Dale@nps.gov)  
Telephone: (703) 487-9316