



The Volunteer

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's Volunteer in Parks Newsletter

September 2009

SCA's Around the Park



While many high school and college students were relaxing on the beaches here at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, or chilling under the air conditioner watching summer reruns, eight students in the Student Conservation Association were working hard replacing the bolts on the West Beach Succession trail.

Elizabeth Cushman created The Student Conservation Association (SCA) as her 1955 college dissertation thesis. Originally called the SCP (Student Conservation Program), the program connects volunteers to volunteer opportunities with parks and programs associated with nature and helping communities.

The West Beach Crew of Kateriene, Kailla, Parker, Althea, Cutis and Kyle are making sure the West Beach Succession Trail is in tip top shape under the watchful eye of SCA supervisors Emily and Peter. A big thank you to the West Beach Succession Trail SCA crew!

Another group of SCA students can't seem to hold still here at the park. From Inland Marsh to Cowles Bog they have been working on everything from invasive plant species management/removal, to trail maintenance. The last week of July, a few were even able to join an archaeological crew from Nebraska as they searched among the dunes for artifacts to learn more about the history of the area.

A few other members of the SCA have been the ones responsible for keeping everyone informed on the E-coli levels in Lake Michigan. Every Wednesday these SCAs collect samples from each of the beaches along the 15 miles of shoreline, and help test the samples for *E-coli* levels. Their test results take 24-hours to process, and on Thursday the fruits of their labors are beheld. Low counts indicate the beaches are safe, but high counts send the SCAs back to the beach to post advisories and collect more samples.



SCA Members Working at West Beach

Thanks for All Your Hard Work!

Coordinator's Corner

It is that time of year again- turn in your volunteer hours in to your volunteer supervisor so we can make sure they get included in the NPS total for the year! Either e-mail or snail mail your volunteer hours by September 30, 2009 so you can be counted!

What do volunteers want to know? Some of our INDU volunteers have been helping out for over 20 years. Others have made the commitment for the first time this year. What would you all like to know about volunteering at INDU? Want to share your stories with other volunteers? This is the perfect place to do it. Please send me your questions or tales and I'll put them in the next newsletter.

Lynda_Lancaster@NPS.gov, or call 219-395-1682. Thanks for sharing!

Tales of Trails from an INDU Intern

By Megan Harris, Civic Engagement and Volunteer Program Intern

When first starting at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, I wasn't sure I'd have time to enjoy the scenery with all the work I had planned for this summer. I found out just how wrong I was! I had the opportunity to walk most of the trails here at the lakeshore (I still haven't conquered Ly-co-ki-we). So if you only have a few hours to spare and want some suggestions, here are my top two trail picks!



Pick 1: West Beach Succession Trail **Backwards!** Yes, backwards. Start at the parking area at West Beach and walk towards the beach on the trail instead of starting the trail at the beach. While I do suggest walking the trail in the recommended direction with the self-guided trail, if you have a few hours to spend at West Beach you should walk it backwards. You get that excellent view of the lake right at the start. When you reach the beach cool off by wading in the lake!

Pick 2: Portage Lakefront and River Walk- just off of U.S. Hwy 12 in Portage. If you haven't been down the newest trail to be added to the lakeshore, head out that way soon! On a clear and sunny day you can relax and watch the boats pulling in and out of the small marina, or see kayakers just off the shore. The concession stand is nice you can have a relaxing treat before heading back to your car, or further down the beach. [The Chicago skyline from the trail over the breakwater is dazzling as dusk approaches!](#)

Late Summer Safety Tips:

Make it Memorable, not Miserable

The summer season is giving way to fall, and nothing says late summer like a trip down to the beach, or a leisurely stroll through cool shaded trails. But the fastest way to ruin a day is sun, heat, and a lack of drinkable water. Here are some suggestions for a memorable visit:

Tip 1: Hydrate! Heat makes you thirsty, and direct sunlight can dehydrate you without your even realizing it. Drinking sugary drinks like soda and some juices can be bad for you. Try to bring (and drink) at least one bottle of water while visiting the park, drink more if you perspire heavily. Your body sweats to keep you cool, and you have to replace the water it loses to keep your natural air conditioners going! Also, make sure if you bring children to have them take drinking breaks on hot days. We all remember what it was like being that age, and how often we'd play far beyond hunger and thirst when we were lost in our imaginations. Having them slow down, cool off, and re-hydrate can keep them from feeling overwhelmed later.

Tip 2: Screen your skin! Bug spray keeps away ticks that may be carrying Lyme disease, or mosquitoes that may carry West Nile. Sun screen protects against the very worse sun damage (skin cancers) to the mildly annoying (itchy sunburns). Sunscreens come in everything from low cover (SPF 10) to high protection (SPF 70+), and in every form from cream to spray. Bug spray is similar, but depending on where you're going for the day you may not need as much protection. Going straight to Kemil from the parking area? You might only need bug spray with a deet concentration of 5%, if any. Hiking down an overgrown trail? Try for the higher concentrations like 25-28%. Going to the beach, but not sure if you're going to hike? Bring the bigger one, just in case! Make sure after returning home to check for ticks if anyone entered a grassy or leaf littered area.

Tip 3: Cool off! Planning on hiking all day? Plan your hike to end at a beach you can do a little wading. Sitting out on the beach? Sit near shade, or bring your own. Cooling off now and again throughout a hot day will keep you from becoming overheated and avoid sun sickness. (Hydrating also helps with this one!) Remember to reapply bug spray or sun screen after cooling off in the lake.

Tip 4: Know your limits! Walking a trail in 70 degrees feels a lot easier than walking it in 99 degree heat. If you feel ill or weak, stop walking and/or seek help. Know the signs of heatstroke and dehydration

before going out, and don't go out alone! (Or at least tell someone when to expect you to return.) Likewise in the water, if you're having troubles swimming due to high/heavy waves, come into the shallows below your knees and take it easy, at least for a bit.

Tip 5: Learn the signs! Both physical and written sign recognition is a big part of safety. Know the written sign for "danger" or "no lifeguard" and be prepared for what is to come. In the same vein, take a first aid class and learn the signs of heatstroke, dehydration, and exhaustion. If you can recognize the signs that the man or woman you just passed on the trail is suffering heatstroke, you can get them the help they need (or at least inform them how to get it). They may not even realize they are in trouble.

The best tip to ever be given is to share. Share your knowledge, your experiences, and your triumphs with people around you, and help to make them safe as well. More information and safety tips can be found under "Plan Your Visit" on the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore website (www.nps.gov/indu).

National Park Service Volunteers and Support for Our National Parks

By Lynda Lancaster, Civic Engagement and Volunteer Program Manager

Why would anyone donate their valuable spare time to a national park unit? The reasons are as variable as the people who generously give their time. The one thing they all have in common is that they support the park where they volunteer. When a park takes on the responsibility for a volunteer it is with the understanding that, like an employee, the park devotes resources, such as supervisory time, uniform and equipment, and training, and the volunteer will, like an employee, follow NPS standards in how the job is done, the quality of the work, and publically supports the park's management policies.

Volunteers may see how hard the park is working to achieve a project, or achieve a goal. That volunteer may want to do additional work, or they may want to do the job in a different way. While the volunteer's efforts are well intentioned, the extra effort or different work above and beyond the requested work by the supervisor is not acceptable. Work of this nature may cause even an employee to be disciplined up to and even including termination.

So what can a volunteer do when they do not agree with how things are being done? First, talk to your volunteer supervisor. They may explain to you why things are done the way they are, or they may direct you to the appropriate person. Sometimes, even though a person has volunteered at the park for a very long time, they cannot support the park's decisions, and in that case, it is time for this well meaning, hard working volunteer to donate their time to another deserving organization.

Volunteer Photo Gallery



Volunteer Opportunities:

The summer and into the fall are GREAT times to come out and give us a hand. Folks can sign up individually or as a group. Either way they can start with me: Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov, or 219-395-1682 and I'll get them to the right supervisor. **All minors must have a parent or guardian sign the NPS Volunteer Agreement, given to them by the volunteer supervisor, and must be chaperoned.**

We also list opportunities at volunteer.gov/gov. or search "Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore" on Serve.gov to find out the latest areas we need help.

Maintenance

Weekend Maintenance Projects- Looking to help clean up the park on the weekend? Lori Nelson wants you! Contact her at Lorena_Nelson@nps.gov and set up a time to meet her and find out what part of the park is on Lori's clean-it-up-list!

September 19- International Coastal Clean-up

In cooperation with Alliance for the Great Lakes, come out, help clean up a beach and collect data on the trash collected. Contact Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov to find out how you can help!

September 26- National Public Lands Day

Come out and enjoy your local national park and help spruce it up!
Contact Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov for more information on all the happenings.

Resource Interpretation and Education

- *Visitor Information Volunteer Supervisor:* Ryan_Koepke@nps.gov

We always need help providing visitor information! These positions work out of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Visitor Center in Porter.

- *Education Volunteer Supervisor:* Christy_Gerlach@nps.gov

There are various school programs that we could use help with, leading the groups, greeting the buses, putting together packets to give to the school groups. There may be some need for help at the Douglas Center in Miller.

- [*Duneland Harvest School Programs-Christy Gerlach*](#)

Duneland Harvest Festival-volunteers needed for set up, various events and clean-up. Please contact [Ted Winterfeld@nps.gov](mailto:Ted_Winterfeld@nps.gov) or call 219-395-1661

Volunteer Supervisor: Laura Thompson

Sunday, September 13 Hobart Prairie Restoration 1:00-4:00

Brush clearing, use of small tools to cut down small trees. Wear long pants, closed toe shoes, and be prepared to walk through thorny brush. Bring sunscreen, water, and a hat- it's sunny!

Please contact Laura at Laura_Thompson@nps.gov to let her know you will be coming. (Limited to 30 volunteers)

Volunteer Program

Got time to help enter data, or help put together a newsletter? Please contact Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov.

Volunteer appreciation Picnic



Is it the Bioblitz effect? The soft rain didn't put a damper on the 120 volunteers from all divisions who came out for the volunteer appreciation picnic! Thank you to the Friends of Indiana Dunes for providing the eats, and thanks to the INDU staff for cooking it up. Thanks also to Jurate & Carl Landwehr for the photos!



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for Comments contact VIP program manager Lynda Lancaster at
219-395-1~~682862~~ or Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov