

# Indiana Dunes National Park Volunteer Service Description



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## Beach Cruisers

### Position Overview

The Northwest Indiana region has some of the most beautiful and diverse parklands/natural areas anywhere. The Indiana Dunes National Park is one of the world's largest urban national park systems encompassing 15,000 acres of Indiana coastal landscape & visited by two million people each year. These parklands add immeasurably to the quality of life in the region. Our Beach Cruiser docent program offers the experience to work in conjunction with the National Park Service and the VRP to enhance and protect our beach areas.

The Beach Cruiser docent will work to enhance and protect the beach area in several ways. The docent will monitor the beach areas for hazards such as fallen trees, excess erosion, litter, etc. Beach signs and other government property will be monitored for damage. The docent will also work with the VRP Division in the education of Indiana Dunes National Park regulations (Superintendent's Compendium), Title 36 of Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR), and the State of Indiana laws and regulations.

### Minimum Commitment

- This program typically takes places June-September
- Conduct a minimum of 1 walk per month on your assigned beach area.

### Goal / Outcome of Job:

- Assist the public and the Visitor and Resource Protection (VRP) Division
- Beach monitoring
- Educate the public on park rules and regulations

### Description of Duties

1. Educate the park's visitors on the following topics:
  - Rules and Regulations
    - Glass on the beach
    - Dog off leash
    - Being in closed area
    - Etc.
  - Beach Safety
    - Dangerous swimming conditions: rip currents, high waves, etc.
    - Dangers in climbing foredunes and causing dune erosion
    - Etc.
  - Fire Safety
    - Dangers of grilling
    - Having an open fire on the beach
    - Hot coals

- Etc.
- Interpretation
  - Educate the visitors about the park (history & biodiversity).
  - Etc.
- 2. Assist the Visitor and Resource Protection Division
  - Report any serious violations to dispatch and/or VRP Park Rangers.
  - Medical
    - Attend to and report any medical incidents that are observed or reported while the docent is walking their assigned beach area.
  - Give directions to other park areas (hiking trails, other beaches, etc.).
  - Document beach hazards such as downed trees, excessive erosion, damaged park property, etc. by taking photos and sending them to the VRP Volunteer Supervisor.
  - Document damaged or missing beach signs or other park property.

### **Knowledge/ Skills Desired**

- Knowledge of Indiana Dunes region.
- Knowledge of simple handheld GPS devices and/or have a willingness to learn.
- The ability to work with a diverse community of volunteers and park staff.
- Knowledge and understanding of the National Park Service mission and goals.
- Possess good written and verbal communication skills.
- Possess ability to use photos, GPS information and verbal/written communication to describe the location and details of beach conditions.
- Understand and respect all park regulations and policies.
- Desire and have the ability to work outdoors.
  - Ability to work in inclement weather.
  - Ability to work in diverse terrain and footing.
  - Ability to handle some strenuous physical activity.

### **Difficulty**

Average. Requires hiking in sand, sometimes in hot weather.

### **Working Conditions:**

Work is mainly performed outdoors in sandy terrain near the shores of Lake Michigan in all extremes of weather. Conditions range from hot, dry, and dusty to foggy, damp, and rainy to wintertime snow. There is frequent exposure to sun, wind, rain, uneven terrain, sand dunes, biting insects, and ticks. Ground footing can vary from loose sand to hard packed sand near the water's edge.

### **Training / Preparation Required:**

- Mandatory safety training will be provided. Volunteer will be issued personal protective equipment as needed.
- If a volunteer observes a violation which they feel requires a law enforcement response, they should **never** approach person(s) engaged in the illegal behavior.
  - Instead, the volunteer should get to a safe location and call 1-800-PARK-TIP to report the situation.

- Informational contact with visitors may be made at the discretion of the Beach Cruiser member based on their level of comfort.
- Ensure that all equipment (radios, medical equipment, etc.) is in good working order.
- If you find anything that you think might be an archeological artifact, please leave it in place. Please do not pick it up or disturb it. Instead, take a photograph and document the location of the piece and then call dispatch or Beach Cruiser supervisor.
- Use all personal protective gear (including tick prevention).

**Uniform**

- Beach Cruisers will be provided with a National Park Service volunteer name tag, shirt or vest, and ball cap. These items are always to be worn while on duty.