

**Visitor Services Project
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore during August 1-14, 2009. A total of 908 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 499 questionnaires were returned resulting in an overall 55% response rate.
- This report profiles a systematic random sample of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore visitors. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of visitor comments are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Visitor Comments Appendix.
- Thirty-four percent of visitor groups were in groups of five or more and 27% were in groups of two. Sixty-five percent of visitor groups were in family groups.
- United States visitors comprised 98% of total visitation during the survey period, with 40% from Indiana, 40% from Illinois, and smaller proportions from 27 other states. International visitors were from seven countries and comprised 2% of total visitation.
- Forty-seven percent of visitors were visiting the park for the first time, while 34% had visited four or more times. In the past twelve months, 66% of visitors visited the park one time and 16% visited two to three times.
- Thirty-eight percent of visitors were ages 31-51 years, 5% were 66 years or older, and 28% were ages 15 years or younger. Six percent of visitors were Hispanic or Latino and 95% were White.
- Most visitor groups (88%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit. Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about the park through previous visits (54%) and friends/relatives/word of mouth (49%). Most visitor groups (85%) received the information they needed. On a future visit, 67% of visitors would use the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore website to obtain information.
- Of those visitor groups that spent more than 24 hours, the average length of stay was 2.8 days. Of those that spent less than 24 hours, the average length of stay was 3.5 hours. The average length of stay for all visitors was 15.9 hours.
- Among visitors that visited other places in the surrounding area (from Gary, IN to Michigan City, IN), 42% of visitor groups visited Indiana Dunes State Park.
- The most common sites visited within the park were Mt. Baldy (38%) followed by the beach in the central part of the park (37%). "Beach activities" was the most common visitor activity (79%) followed by walking/hiking (51%).
- The information service and facility most commonly used by visitor groups was directional signs (68%). The most commonly used visitor service and facility was restrooms (87%).
- Most visitor groups (87%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as "very good" or "good." Less than two percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality as "very poor" or "poor."

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-7863 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.

