



SCHOOL-YEAR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS



Education Partner of
Indiana Dunes National Park

Join us outdoors
to meet your goals for students
while inspiring lasting curiosity
and stewardship with nature!

Classroom lessons come to life with Dunes Learning Center

This year, take your students outdoors for an unforgettable learning adventure with Dunes Learning Center.

Our environmental education programs explore the science of ecosystems, plus the relationships between people and their environment over time. With a focus on the Indiana Dunes region, these nature-based adventures support Indiana Academic Standards in science, social studies, geography, math, and English/language arts.



Along with a range of program options outlined on the following pages, you'll find that the education team at Dunes Learning Center takes great pride in working closely with you to customize content and activities to meet the needs of your students.

Let us know how we can help your students explore, learn, and grow outdoors!



Get started now!

Complete the program inquiry form online at DunesLearningCenter.org/schoolyear or give us a call at 219-395-9555 to learn more.

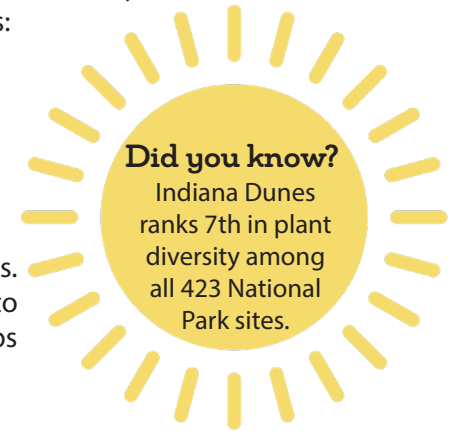
Dunes Learning Center | 700 Howe Road | Chesterton, IN 46304

Diversity. Community. Sustainability.

Dunes Learning Center's programs are linked directly to three of Indiana Dunes National Park's interpretive themes:

Remarkable Species Diversity

Factors that include geological processes, climate, weather, and the position of Lake Michigan came together to create remarkable species diversity within a variety of ecosystems in the Indiana dunes. This provides outstanding opportunities to appreciate the rich ecological relationships that nurture and sustain our civilization.



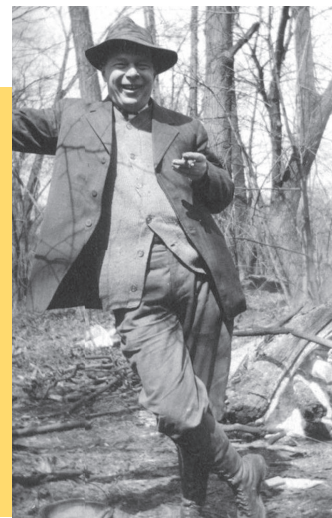
Land Use Strategies Over Time

The cultural resources of Indiana Dunes National Park demonstrate a wide range of land use strategies over time that reveal the dynamic relationship between humans and the environment. Changing perceptions of the value of natural resources guide us to decisions that are vital to our survival. Lessons in adaptation, conservation, and stewardship provide the base for students to be empowered to make changes in their communities.



Legacy of Scientific Inquiry

Henry Chandler Cowles, a botanist from the University of Chicago, inspired efforts to preserve the intricate ecosystems of the Indiana dunes. Continuing his legacy of education and scientific inquiry is increasingly vital to help address current threats from human impact both locally and globally.



Scientific knowledge of ecosystems and biodiversity and the interaction of humans with ecosystems will help students respond to economic, social, and environmental challenges for a more sustainable future.

When students spend time outdoors, they are healthier, happier, and more successful in school!

Environmental education is important. Along with teaching children to care for and protect natural resources, it leads to improved academic success. Decades of research shows outdoor learning can boost standardized test scores while increasing 21st Century skills such as:

- Critical thinking
- Self confidence
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Perseverance

Programs with Dunes Learning Center provide hands-on, memorable experiences that encourage students to consider how their values and behaviors can influence and ultimately impact the world around them.

Programs present differing perspectives, encourage students to consider new ideas, and foster a lifelong love of learning. Our naturalists are trained and informed educators who involve the whole person, address multiple learning styles, and facilitate respectful discussions.



At Dunes Learning Center, we strive to ensure our programs are available to all students.

Thanks to generous donors and program grants, our scholarship fund provides need-based support to students and schools that lack the economic opportunity to participate in environmental education programs. Funds are available on a sliding scale based on free and reduced-price meal qualification. Participating teachers are invited to nominate students for summer camp scholarships so they can continue exploring, learning, and growing during a full week of camp in their National Park.



A Trusted Leader in Environmental Education

Dune Learning Center has been part of a large-scale research study measuring outcomes for environmental education led by Dr. Marc Stern (Virginia Tech) and Dr. Bob Powell (Clemson) since 2018. Based on observation and student surveys, **Dunes Learning Center achieved above-average outcomes for a culturally diverse audience.**

Here's how we do it:

The Power of the Group – Properly preparing groups for their visit, offering ways for them to get excited and engaged before a site visit, and keeping group sizes smaller all help build better outcomes.

The Power of the Place – Having students engage viscerally with all their senses in a natural setting outdoors is key. Introducing students to settings foreign to their everyday life also improves outcomes.

The Power of the People – The educators who interact with students are key to success. Engaging with students in a discussion and dialogue, speaking from personal, emotional, and sincere perspectives, works... lectures do not.

The Power of the Message – Clearly outlining ways students can become advocates through small and large actions in their lives beyond the program is a key to helping students move toward behavioral change.



School-Year Environmental Education Programs

With options to join us on campus in Indiana Dunes National Park (overnight and day programs) and for us to come to you in the community (multi-part and single experience programs), the education team works closely with you to deliver a unique and customized experience that meets your needs while reinforcing what is being taught in the classroom.

On Campus in Indiana Dunes National Park

Frog in the Bog	grades 4-6	fall & spring
DuneVersity	middle school	fall & spring
DuneScopes	high school	fall & spring
Winter in the Dunes	grades 3-5	winter
Dunes Adventure Academy	middle school	winter
Climate Change in the Maple Sugar Range	high school	winter

In the Community

Nature Navigators	grades 3-5	fall, winter, spring
Citizen Science	middle school	winter & spring
Calumet is my Backyard	high school	fall, winter, spring
Dunes to You	grades preK-adult	fall, winter, spring
Watershed Education	grades 3-adult	fall

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On Campus - program details on pages 8 & 9

The dunes, woods, streams, beaches, and bogs of Indiana Dunes National Park are a living classroom where abstract concepts become meaningful, memorable, and fun!

Students challenge themselves and work together, while enjoying the natural beauty of their very own National Park. They return to the classroom with a new foundation of skills and an appreciation for learning that will last a lifetime.



Lodging

There are 10 accessible cabins on campus with comfortable bunk beds, private bathrooms, heat, and air conditioning. Each cabin accommodates 7 students plus a teacher or parent chaperone for a full camp capacity of 70 students and 10 adults.

Food & Dining

Dunes Learning Center's kitchen staff prepares healthy, kid-friendly food and can meet individual dietary and allergy needs. Meals are served in Cowles Lodge and meal time is intentionally-designed to build community, with the opportunity to interact and reflect on activities.



In the Community - program details on pages 10 & 11

Dunes Learning Center's education team will come to you with outdoor learning programs that provide opportunities to experience nature and explore concepts in the field and the classroom.



When students learn about nature and discover how they can make a difference in local school yards, parks, and natural sites; they gain a deeper understanding of their impact on developing stronger, healthier, and more sustainable communities.



School-Year Programs On Campus

Customize an overnight or day experience

Spring & Fall

Frog in the Bog

(recommended for grades 4-6)

Students explore the natural and cultural history of the region, the interconnections of human and natural environments, and the rich biological diversity found in the dunes.



Winter - Introducing an all-new STEM-strong line-up!



Winter in the Dunes (grades 3-5)

Students make observations about the flora and fauna that overwinter in the dunes to explore the concepts of change, conservation and community.

"This program is so wonderful because it meets more than teacher's educational goals. It meets the needs of children—they all feel challenged and then successful. It is so gratifying to see the smiles and pride."
--5th grade teacher from Lafayette, IN who participated in the 2019 Winter in the Dunes pilot




Dunes Adventure Academy (middle school)

Students embark on a wilderness adventure to learn about natural resources, applying and expanding their knowledge of math, science and geography using navigation tools and more.

Climate Change in the Maple Sugar Range (high school)

Students are introduced to real world scientific research using a variety of forestry tools to collect data on sugar maple trees in Indiana Dunes National Park and evaluate change over time.



Funding for new and improved **Winter programs** provided in part by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources Lake Michigan Coastal Program.



Introducing new classroom content to extend the learning!

ON THE LOG-IN

Frog on the Log-In takes students on interactive, virtual adventures utilizing Google Earth to provide authentic trail experiences, including a pre-visit: Introduction to Indiana Dunes National Park, an enrichment activity: Creature Feature, and a post-visit: Similar Ecosystems across the US.



Funding for **Frog on the Log-In** provided by the Lilly Endowment Youth Program Resilience Fund and the National Park Foundation's Open Outdoors for Kids program with major support from Union Pacific Railroad.

DuneVersity (middle school)

Students work as a team to plan, conduct and analyze a field investigation, gaining real world experience in the fields of conservation and natural resource management.

DuneScopes (high school)

Students explore biodiversity, ecosystems, sustainability and human impacts on the environment while gaining real world experience in conservation and natural resource management.



Science Olympiad Team Training Camp (middle school)

Bring science to life with two days of hands-on Science Olympiad event coaching and team-building activities in a fun atmosphere that creates positive memories and motivates students to compete as a unified team.

School-Year Programs In the Community

Customize a multi-part or day experience

Nature Navigators (grades 3-5)

Students learn from new experiences, gaining local environmental knowledge as they develop critical thinking skills central to “good science”—questioning, investigating, forming hypotheses, interpreting data, analyzing, developing conclusions, and solving problems.



Citizen Science (middle school)

Students take part in real-world inquiry and problem solving as they choose a project, collect data, and report their findings for ongoing national environmental research projects. Along the way, they work alongside local experts to discover how they can cause positive change in the environment and their community. A year-end group event gives them the opportunity to share their project results and learn more about civic engagement in their community.



Calumet is my Backyard (high school)

Through data analysis and synthesis, students investigate issues that face the Great Lakes and the human role in creating, perpetuating, and helping to solve these problems. They gain a deeper understanding of the need for conservation and the protection of natural resources in the Great Lakes region, study careers related to the environment and plan/implement service-learning action projects related to habitat restoration.

Dunes To You (grades PreK-adult)

This program for all ages and abilities brings hands-on learning to your classroom and outdoor natural sites near you. Project-based lessons combine art and science with fun, interactive activities featuring local flora and fauna.



Watershed Education (recommended for grades 3-adult)

Students gain an increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the Lake Michigan watershed with the unique opportunity to work together and paddle a Voyageur canoe. They learn about the preservation and management of biodiversity and natural resources with hands-on learning stations and stewardship activities.



Teacher & Student Fan Mail

Environmental education is a powerful tool to help teachers and students achieve their goals. Programs delivered in an outdoor classroom with Dunes Learning Center have a proven track record of providing excellent hands-on, active, and fun educational and team-building experiences.

Don't just take our word for it:

"The trip to Dunes Learning Center was a life-changing experience for me. My favorite part was getting the chance to explore the unique ecosystems of the dunes with some of my closest friends."



"These young people have never experienced anything like this! The staff was amazing at helping build students' confidence if they were experiencing difficulties on the trail. Back at school, one student shared that this was the most beautiful and best trip of his life!"

"The students are using new vocabulary to show off the new words they learned. Thank you for giving our students such a unique experience!"



"I really enjoyed the lessons about water pollution and wetlands and farming and business and the environment. It really puts you right in the middle of so many decisions being made right where we live every day."

"Thank you to all of the amazing Dunes Learning Center staff for their time and effort this week. Our kids remember this experience for their entire life and reflect fondly on their relationships with trail leaders and classmates!"



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