**National Park Offers Beach Parking Information Line**

INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK: Severe shoreline erosion along Lake Michigan and the need for social distancing due to the Covid 19 Pandemic will make for a very different beach season this summer at Indiana Dunes National Park. To assist the public in finding an open beach and one that has available parking, the National Park Service will provide a Beach Parking Information Line.

The potential for dangerous crowding on beaches is increased with the current closure of beach access at Central Avenue and Lake View due to damage from erosion. Record high water levels on Lake Michigan have also resulted in narrower beaches leaving less room for social distancing.

Beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 23, the public can call 219-395-1003 to get recorded information on available parking at Indiana Dunes National Park beaches and the nearby Indiana Dunes State Park. This information line will be updated regularly throughout the day during beach season between the Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. The information can help visitors avoid smaller national park beaches and parking lots like Porter, Kemil, and Mt. Baldy that tend to fill early on weekends and make social distancing more difficult. Access to the beach at Portage Lakefront has also been restored in time for the holiday weekend.

National park rangers and local officials will be monitoring park beaches and lots for overcrowding and dangerous conditions and will close them if needed to protect public health. Porter Beach, which was recently closed due to overcrowding, will reopen for the Memorial Day weekend, but the National Park Service and town authorities will be monitoring it closely.

To avoid overcrowding at smaller beach areas, the National Park Service recommend that visitors use Indiana Dunes State Park or the National Park's West Beach this weekend. Both have extensive beaches, large parking lots, bath houses, concessions, and lifeguards. Signage to West Beach from Highway 49 is being improved to help direct people. Admission will be free at West Beach on Memorial Day Weekend.

Visitors are urged to stay safe by practicing social distancing on the beaches to protect their health and that of other visitors. Also, Lake Michigan can be a very dangerous place. Don't swim when there are large waves due to the danger of rip currents. If you have children or non-swimmers keep them within arm's reach when in the water or use one of the lifeguarded beaches at West Beach or the state park.

[www.nps.gov/indu](http://www.nps.gov/indu)

*Indiana Dunes National Park is part of the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 420 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at*[*www.nps.gov*](http://www.nps.gov/)*.*