



Michigan City Parks and Recreation Department

100 E. Michigan Blvd. / Suite 2
Michigan City, IN 46360-3293
(219) 873-1506
www.michigancityparks.com

2019 Annual Beach Management Report



Washington Park Beach

Submitted by Jeremy Kienitz, Superintendent
and Shannon Eason, Assistant Superintendent

Beach Marking System

The saw horse beach markers were replaced in 2017 with a single pole. The north and south sides of each pole have a reflective street sign with the flag's location.



Beach Safety Signage

Three-sided sign kiosks are located in high traffic areas at Washington Park beach, the Senior Center beach path, and the California Avenue beach path.

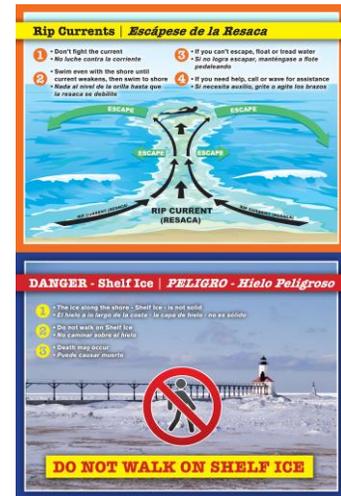
Side 1: Location on Beach



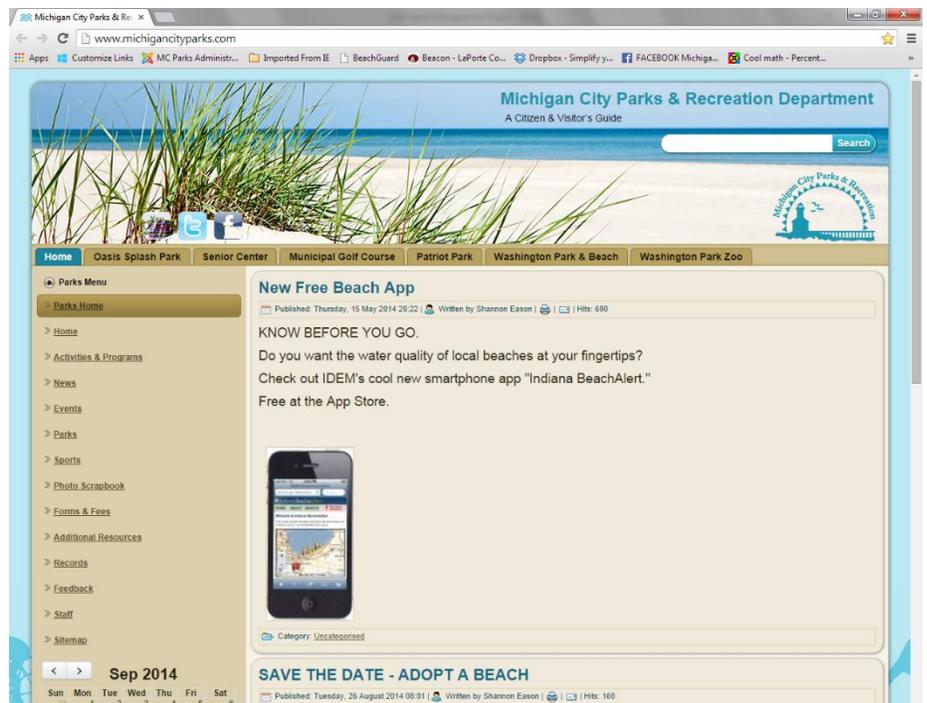
Side 2: Regulations & Tips



Side 3: Rip current and Shelf ice warnings



Beach location signs contain a QR, or quick response code. When scanned with a smart phone, the QR code will take the user directly to our website www.michigancityparks.com, where they have instant access to current beach conditions, water quality test results, beach rules and regulations, events, and more information about the Park Department.



Water Quality Testing and Notification Program

The Park Department was the recipient of a \$22,035 Beach Act Grant through The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) funded through the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for monitoring and notification activities that were conducted in LaPorte County adjacent to Lake Michigan Coastal Recreational Waters during the 2018 beach monitoring season.

Water testing was performed by the Sanitary District of Michigan City. Program dates were May 18th through September 7th, 2019.



Notification of test results were posted daily by Park Staff:

- Beach Hotline 219.873.1540
- Park Department website www.michigancityparks.com
- IDEM's Beach Guard website <https://extranet.idem.in.gov/beachguard>
- Beach Notification Signs (14 signs from Washington Park to Beachwalk)
- Washington Park Entry Gates at Lot#1 and Lot#2

Testing sites included:

- Washington Park – 3 samples 7 days per week
- Stop 2 – California Avenue – 3 samples 7 days per week
- Stop 7 – Beachwalk – 1 sample 7 days per week

Beach Sanitary Surveys

As requested by IDEM, the Sanitary District completed Beach Sanitary Surveys during their water testing which monitored temperature, waves, wind direction, rain fall events, number of birds, number of sun bathers and swimmers, number of boats, amounts of litter, etc.

WASHINGTON PARK

	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019
Total Samples	339		339		339	
Total Exceedances	18		18		18	
Total Actions	12		9		12	
1-234 OPEN	101	89%	104	92%	101	89%
234-999 ADVISORY	12	11%	6	5%	12	11%
1,000 CLOSED	0	0%	3	3%	0	0%

STOP 2 AT CALIFORNIA AVENUE

	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019
Total Samples	339		339		339	
Total Exceedances	18		6		8	
Total Actions	12		4		5	
1-234 OPEN	101	89%	109	96%	108	96%
234-999 ADVISORY	12	11%	4	4%	5	4%
1,000 CLOSED	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

STOP 7 AT BEACHWALK

	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019
Total Samples	113		113		113	
Total Exceedances	5		3		4	
Total Actions	5		3		4	
1-234 OPEN	108	96%	110	97%	96%	97%
234-999 ADVISORY	5	4%	3	3%	4%	3%
1,000 CLOSED	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%

We will apply for the IDEM grant for the 2020 beach season and request testing seven days per week at all three locations.

Beach Management Practices

- 2009 Resolution No. 4058 prohibiting the feeding of wildlife on Park Department and Port Authority properties
- 2009 Revised beach sanitation methods (deep tinning)
- 2009 Covered trash barrels (IDNR Grant)
- 2010 Goose Eradication Program
 - Bird bangers, rubber coyotes, and plastic alligators were used throughout Washington Park and the Port Authority to deter geese
 - Tall grasses were incorporated in the plantings along the marina walkway to deter geese
- 2011 NOAA Rip Current Observation Report
- 2012 Beach marking system implemented
- 2012 Beach safety signage installed
- 2013 USGS Predictive E-coli Model Implemented
- 2017 Installed life rings at Millennium Plaza and along the lighthouse pier
- 2018 "Monday Mornings" beach clean-up program was implemented
- 2019 (4) Electronic Message Board Signs were installed in Washington Park
- 2019 Beach path erosion control and public access project

Lifeguard Operation

Dates of Operation

Saturday May 25th – Sunday, August 11th

- Had to close early for the season due to lack of staffing as staff returned to school.

Demographics of Lifeguard Staff

Number of Lifeguards employed by the Park Department: 13
Employees currently attending High School: 2
Employees currently attending College or University: 9
Employees currently out of College: 2



Training

Throughout the summer, the Washington Park Lifeguards completed several training sessions at different areas on the beach other than the mock rescue. The purpose of this training was to practice proper procedures for situations on the beach. Examples of scenarios were:

- 1) Using the rescue lines in wavy conditions
- 2) Patrons with multiple injuries
- 3) Missing persons in water
- 4) Radio procedures

Statistical Data Summary

INCIDENTS	NUMBER	%
Total incidents	40	100%
Medical assistance	17	43%
Missing persons	14	35%
Fatalities (while on duty)	0	0%
Rescues	4	10%
Other (non-medical)	5	12%

NEW Safety Enhancements

- Camera Installation

The City of Michigan City worked with the Michigan City Port Authority to install PTZ High Resolution Cameras along the Pier, in Trail Creek and on top of the Lifeguard Tower. The

purpose of this is to be able to assist emergency response personnel upon arriving to an incident in the water. With this technology, we are hopeful that response times will be quick and we will have more information on the incident upon arrival to ensure the safety of those visiting our lakefront.

- Throw Rings

The City of Michigan City received a \$12,000 donation from Arcellor Mittal to purchase and install throw rings along the pier and Trail Creek. This has been a huge success as we are aware of at least two rescues that have taken place and used these throw rings.

- Digital Signage

The City of Michigan City received a second donation from Arcellor Mittal in the amount of \$50,000 to place a total of six digital signs in Washington Park. These are located at the entry of the Pier, by the boat ramp and on the lifeguard tower. These digital signs display warning and safety messages regarding the conditions of the lake.

- PA System

The final step of our Washington Park safety enhancements was the installation of a PA System that we could utilize in case of an emergency situation. This has been programmed to communicate directly with our handheld radios which we can notify those at the beach in a very timely and orderly fashion when an incident arises.

End of Season Wrap up

The lifeguard staff was led by Head Lifeguard Allison Thomas and Assistant Head Lifeguard's Cecelia Latchford, Ethan Piergalski & Elijah Schoof. The 2019 season was an overall success from the standpoint of visitor's safety. We had many incidents, yet no fatalities while our staff was on duty. We were working short-handed all season as we only had thirteen on staff, with two of them being part-time. We are lacking certified lifeguards in our area as well as lifeguards who are interested in working at Washington Park. Overall, I was very pleased with the work of our staff and their ability to work through this season and stay focused when times were tough.

The expectations placed on the Washington Park Lifeguards are very high. They are hired into a highly important position where the lives of the public are in their hands on a daily basis. They should be recognized for the job they do in protecting our community and visitors who utilize Washington Park. With their knowledge and assistance, many visitors to Washington Park are able to leave having a positive experience.

Monday Mornings!



We continued this very successful beach clean up program in 2019. We kicked off the year with a partnership between the Park Department, Healthy Communities of LaPorte County and the Alliance for the Great Lakes on Earth Day, April 22nd. We continued the program every Monday morning from 8 am to 10 am throughout the season with various sponsors who brought out coffee and doughnuts for their staff who participated. The Park Department offered free parking for volunteers, garbage bags, gloves, disposal of the garbage, and a staff member present at every event. Hundreds of volunteers came out this

year to help preserve and protect our lakefront. The program will continue through the month of October and we look forward to another successful season in 2020.

Beach Path Erosion Control & Public Access Project

The Park Department was awarded an Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake Michigan Coastal Program Grant in 2019 in the amount of \$44,500 to further implement our “Sheridan Beach and The Esplanade Public Access, Land Management and Implementation Plan” by installing 4 beach access mats at California, Louisiana, Georgia and Illinois Avenues in Michigan City, and planting the exposed sand around them with marram grass per the specifications outlined in our land management plan. Georgia Avenue is an emergency vehicle access path and must be kept 10’ wide. Once the mat is installed grass will be planted on exposed sand no more than 3’ from each edge of the mat. The beach mats were funded in part by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake Michigan Coastal Program.

In addition to the beach mats, we participated in workshops with the City of Gary, Save the Dunes, Indiana University Northwest, and the National Park Service in 2019. The group created consistent messaging to encourage park users to use managed, designated beach paths instead of social trails to protect the fragile dune ecosystems and prevent erosions. Signage and flyers have been created and now mark our designated trails. They flyers have been distributed to homeowners, homeowner associations, realtors, contractors and have been posted in all beach restroom buildings and on our websites.

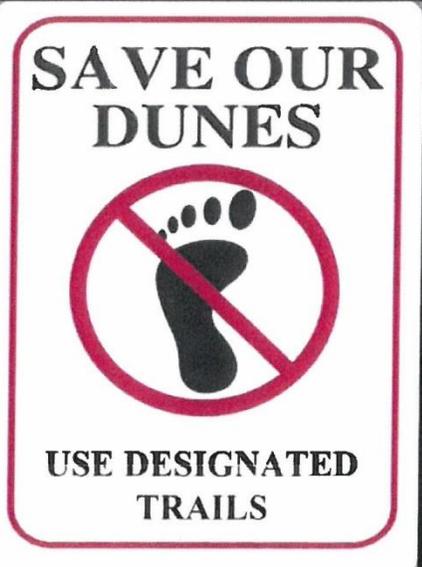


STAY ON DESIGNATED TRAILS

Save the Dunes

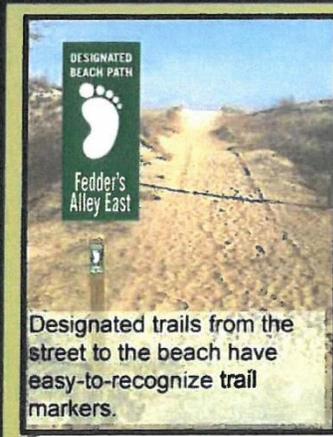


Above: A section of the Sheridan Beach Esplanade showing two designated trails managed by Michigan City near several unmarked "social" trails damaging the dunes.



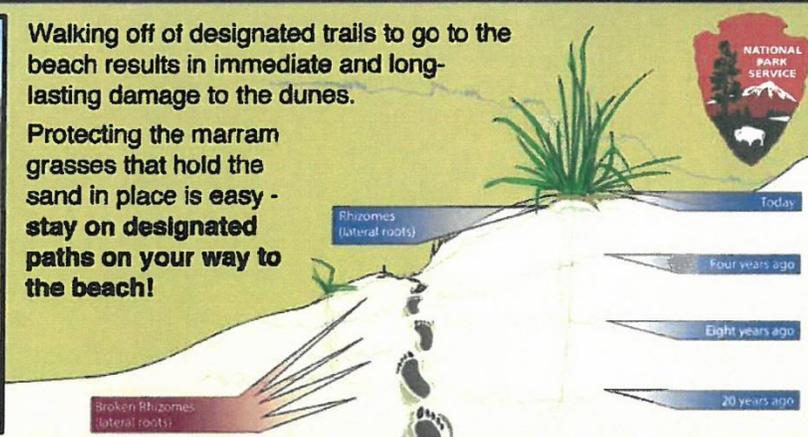
Download a Beach Access Map today: michigancityparks.com

Left: A map of designated trails managed for easy beach access in Michigan City. Scan the QR code to learn more.



Walking off of designated trails to go to the beach results in immediate and long-lasting damage to the dunes.

Protecting the marram grasses that hold the sand in place is easy - **stay on designated paths on your way to the beach!**



This publication was made possible by a Small Grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake Michigan Coastal Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The project was developed in partnership with the City of Gary, Indiana Dunes National Park, Indiana University Northwest, Michigan City Parks and Recreation Department and Save the Dunes.