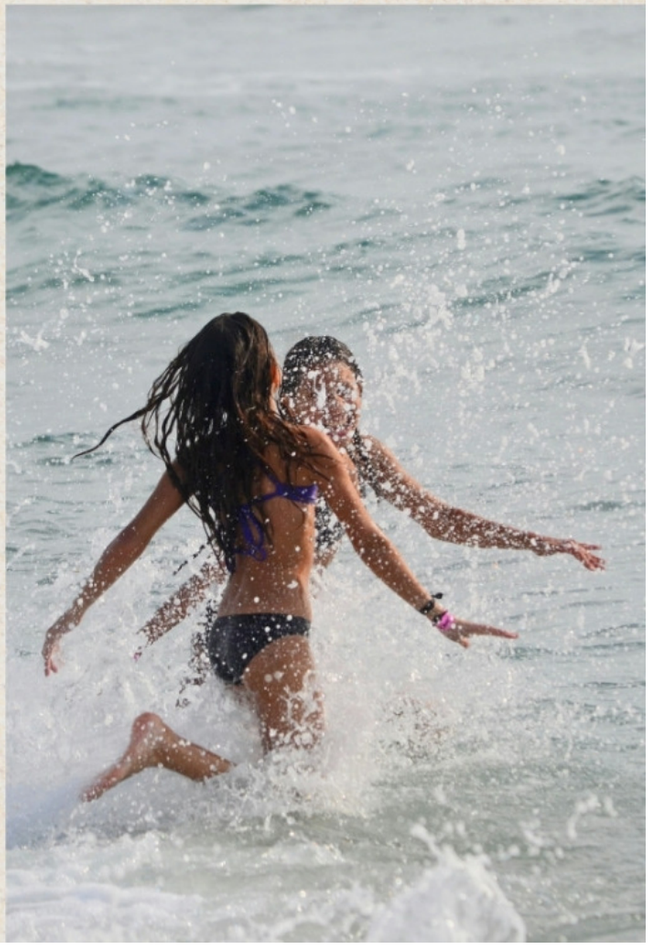

find your place
INDIANA DUNES
A guide to the communities along
Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline.
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Introduction

THINKING OF MOVING TO THE INDIANA DUNES?

It's a decision that tends to surprise people — including the people making it. Most didn't arrive here by plan. A weekend visit, a friend's casual remark, a drive that took an unexpected turn — and suddenly they were paying attention to a place they hadn't considered before. What they found: glorious beaches, endless hiking, outstanding restaurants, genuine communities with real character, rich artistic traditions, easy access to Chicago and Indianapolis. But mostly, they found something harder to name — the feeling that this place had been here all along, waiting.







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This guide is for people in that “Aha!” moment. Maybe you are among them — perhaps not ready to do anything yet, but intrigued to learn more, to understand what living in the dunes might be like.

What follows is an introduction to the Indiana Dunes shoreline communities. I hope it helps you see what makes this place so special.

If you'd like to learn more about the broader region, be sure to search for our near-shore buyers' guide.

Bonnie Hawksworth, Realtor®


Part 1
DEFINING THE
INDIANA DUNES

The first thing to understand about the Indiana Dunes is that it isn't a town. It isn't the national park, exactly — though the park is here; two very famous parks, in fact. It isn't a single community or a defined real estate market in the way Zillow might parse it. It's an interconnected region with extraordinary character, shaped by the one of the greatest economic, recreational, and cultural influences in the world: Lake Michigan.



Proximity to Lake Michigan governs everything. The temperature. The light. The microclimate. The wind and waves that build and rebuild the dunes after every storm. The reason people who live here feel like they got away with something — that they found a place that exists outside the logic of what a place this close to a major American city should cost and feel like.

To understand the broader Indiana Dunes region, it helps to think in layers. From the water's edge moving inland, the landscape shifts gradually — shoreline enclaves give way to the gateway towns of Duneland, then to open countryside. In between, the regional cities provide the "weight" that holds the layers together. The character of one layer shapes the one beside it.

Place

INDIANA DUNES





The shoreline communities of the Indiana Dunes are intimate, residential outposts nestled directly along Lake Michigan. They are characterized by dramatic topography, wooded landscapes, high-end architecture, and extreme seclusion.

What unites the tiny enclaves is a certain lake-adjacent lifestyle. What distinguishes one from the next is character, community culture, and the particular way each place has decided what it wants to be.

Each has its own story. The following pages tell them.

Place

ALONG THE SHORELINE

Place

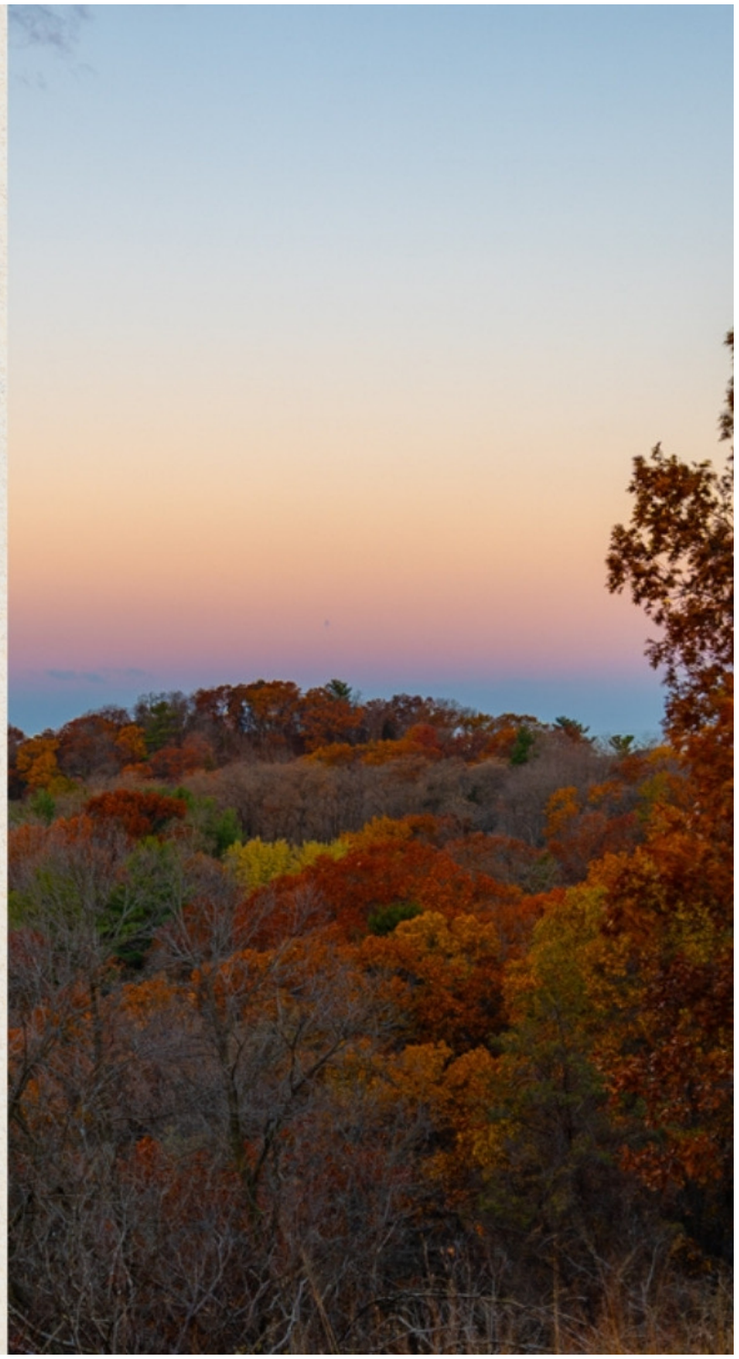
DUNE ACRES

Dune Acres is the most private of the shoreline enclaves — and the one that most wears that privacy as an identity. Mineral Springs Road is the single route into town. The town has no sidewalks or street lamps. No commercial businesses. No reason for anyone to stop who isn't stopping to stay.

And stay they do. Many residents are multi-generational; several trace their roots to the town's founding generation. The beloved clubhouse is the center of town social life and possesses a nostalgic quality reminiscent of simpler times.

Home to Cowles Bog and Howes Prairie, Dune Acres is among the most ecologically diverse locations in North America. Senator Paul Douglas, who helped establish the Indiana Dunes National Park, lived in Dune Acres. Former resident Lois Howes is the namesake of the Park's Howes Prairie.

Homes in Dune Acres are thoughtfully situated along the lake, or tucked into the rolling dunes: original log homes, tasteful mid-century's, and a wealth of relatively modest residences simply blessed with a breathtaking situation. Prices here are higher than neighboring towns, but Dune Acres remains the ultimate retreat for those who value silence over a social scene.





Place

OGDEN DUNES

If Norman Rockwell imagined a lakeside community, no doubt it would resemble Ogden Dunes.

The town is defined by steep terrain, sweeping lake views, and deep civic roots — the kind of neighborhood where kids still run amok without constant supervision.

Ogden Dunes feels social and interconnected, centered around a community church, an active garden club, and busy summertime activities.

It's larger and more populated than its lake-side neighbors, and more closely connected to Chicago via the town's stop on the South Shore line.

Ogden Dunes was the birth place of the "Save the Dunes" movement, and its legacy of citizen-led environmental activism persists today. The town is within walking distance of some of the best trails around, and its Pollywog Pond is a designated Birdtown Indiana site.

Homes in Ogden Dunes range from modest bungalows to exceptional examples of mid-century modern — including a 1939 Frank Lloyd Wright. Price points reflect the same diversity, with recent sales ranging from below $400,000 to $1.5M.

While several communities are nestled within the Indiana Dunes National Park, Beverly Shores is often considered the most uniquely and closely intertwined. The town is home to two NPS beaches, hiking trails, and the Century of Progress Architectural District. The homes, originally built for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, were relocated to Beverly Shores by barge and are unlike anything else on the shoreline. The Florida Tropical House features expansive roof terraces to prioritize views of Lake Michigan and the dunes.



Others were built using natural materials and novel methods that influenced construction for decades after.

The town's small commercial corridor—*The Strip*, as locals call it—anchors summer life. Centered around the South Shore rail station, the Depot Museum & Art Gallery, and a handful of shops and restaurants, it has the unhurried character of a place that is cool without trying.

Homes in Beverly Shores range from modest cottages and bungalows to mid-century modern and striking Spanish Colonial Revivals that date to the community's founding. Recent sale prices range from $350,000 to more than $2M.

Place

BEVERLY SHORES

Place

MILLER BEACH

Miller Beach is the western gateway to Indiana Dunes National Park, where Gary's industrial grit meets the sand and sea. It is the region's most vibrant, culturally diverse coastal enclave — and a reminder the dunes have long drawn bohemians, intellectuals, and other interesting people.

Marquette Park is the heart of Miller Beach, home to the historic Aquatorium and stunning views of Chicago. Its pulse is Lake Street, a walkable stretch of galleries, boutiques, and the acclaimed 18th Street Brewery. Hikers and artists alike find inspiration in Miller Wood's mosaic of woodlands and wetlands.

Home shoppers will find good value in Miller Beach. Off-shore listings below $300,00 are not unusual, while one can still find lake-side listings for under $1M.





Place

PORTER BEACH

Porter Beach is a compact, low-key residential enclave that captures the nostalgic spirit of a classic summer getaway. Tucked neatly between Dune Acres and the state park, it's a well-kept secret for those who want a front-row seat to the lake without the urban bustle.

Historically known as Waverly Beach and Johnson's Beach, the community was among the first to arise along the shoreline. The tents and shacks are gone, but Porter Beach represents the unpretentious, sandy-foot lifestyle that first drew vacationers to the dunes a century ago.

The Porter Beach housing market is eclectic. You can still find a modest home away from the lake for less than $400,000 — or a lakefront architectural statement for several million. In between, the values are very good.

Located just east of Michigan City, Long Beach is the quintessential upscale shoreline community. It is defined by its long, linear stretch of sandy beach and a row of impressive homes that line the lakefront.

While other dunes towns feel "tucked away" in the woods, Long Beach feels open and prestigious, with a classic coastal aesthetic. The community is famous for its "numbered stops" — historic wooden stairs that provide public access to the water.

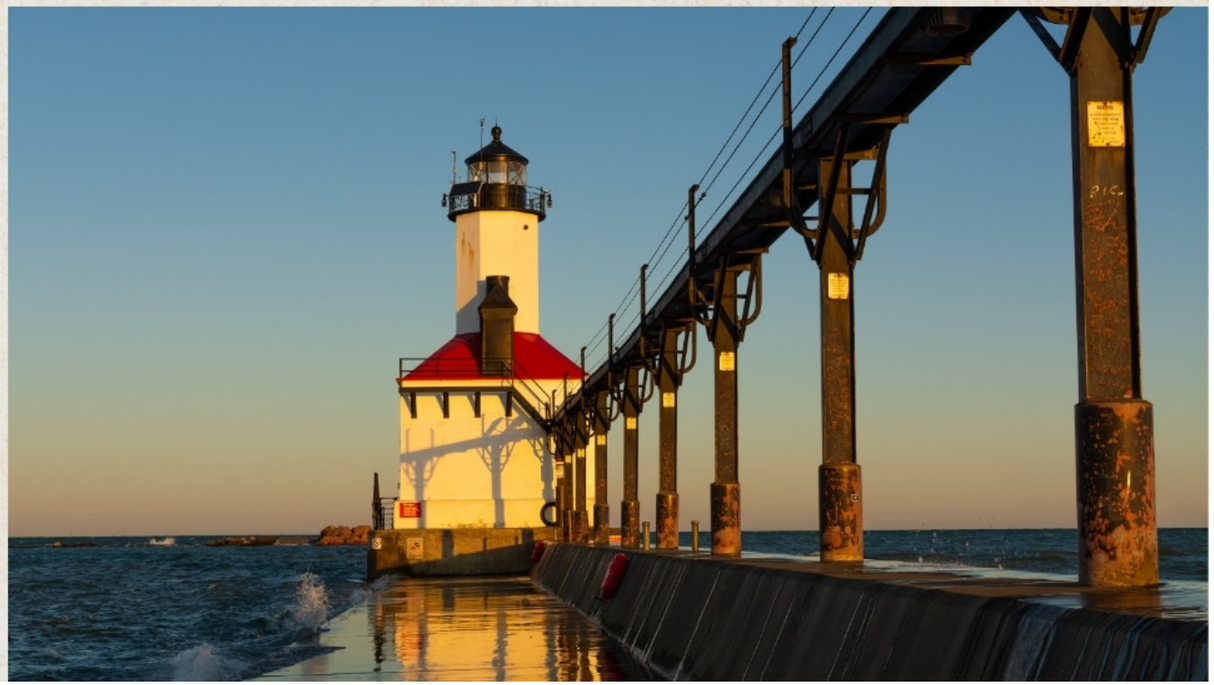
It's a place of morning joggers, lakefront porches, and a rich storied history.

Place

LONG BEACH

The foot care magnate, Dr. Scholl summered in Long Beach. Chief Justice John Roberts grew up in the community. John Lloyd Wright (son of FLW), established his architectural practice here and designed many homes in the area.

Long Beach has more homes than other shoreline communities, and a more varied market to match. Prices start around $400,000 for something away from the lake, and can top $3M for a luxury listing on the water.



Michiana Shores is a hidden, heavily wooded enclave sitting right on the border of Indiana and Michigan. Unlike the beachfront-focused towns to the west, life here is lived under a thick canopy of oaks and pines. This "forest-by-the-lake" vibe creates a cool, shaded retreat that feels worlds away from the sun-drenched dunes.

For those who crave the sun and sand, the town shares beach access at Stop 37 with its twin-city, Michiana, Michigan.



Michiana Shores is known for its quirky, rustic charm and a variety of architectural styles, from log cabins to modern glass houses. Prices begin range from around $425,000 to $1.5M. Notably, buyers will get more home for their money here versus just over the border in Michigan.

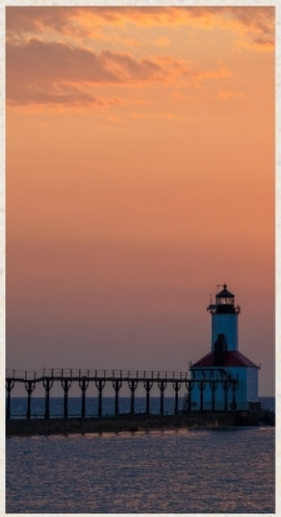
Michiana Shores serves as a peaceful buffer between the busier hubs of Michigan City and New Buffalo. It's the ideal spot for those who want access and proximity to the lake but prefer the privacy and rustling leaves of a deep, secluded woodland.

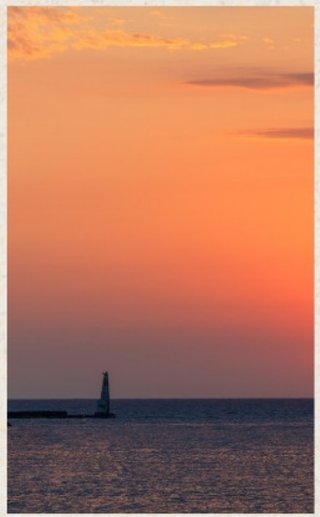
Place

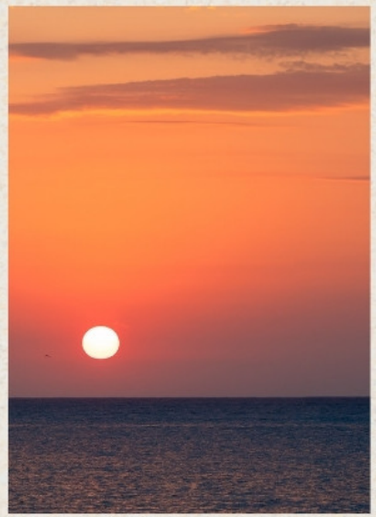
MICHIANA SHORES

Place

FROM MICHIGAN CITY ...







Northeast of downtown Michigan City, the shoreline gives way to a mosaic of neighborhoods, independent towns, and unincorporated communities, each with its own character and identity, united only by their situation along one of the most scenic stretches of the Indiana shoreline.

Sheridan Beach, serves as the vibrant "front porch" of Michigan City, famous for its towering dunes — most notably the legendary "Big Bertha"— and its front-row seat to the iconic Michigan City Lighthouse. An architectural mosaic of weathered beach cottages and modern glass-and-steel builds, the neighborhood draws those who want the roar of the waves paired with the convenience of being a short walk away from a local brewery or a summer festival.

Shoreland Hills rises just east of Washington Park on the back dunes — elevated, wooded, and deliberately quiet. Deeded beach access through Stop 31 keeps the shoreline uncrowded, and the rolling topography produces lake views that feel earned. It's a buffer community in the best sense: close enough to Michigan City's amenities to use them, removed enough to ignore them entirely.

Place

... TO THE MICHIGAN BORDER

Beachwalk sits just inland from Lake Michigan, centered around the tranquil Lake Kai. The community seems plucked from the outer banks or the Georgia Sea Islands. The neighborhood is famous for its brightly colored cottages with white picket fences and wide front porches. The vibe is decidedly family-oriented and nostalgic, providing a meticulously manicured retreat that contrasts with the wilder, natural dunes nearby.

Just a few miles east, **Duneland Beach** offers a distinct shift in tempo, trading "boardwalk energy" for a wooded, private retreat. This community is tucked behind dense canopies of oak and pine, providing a level of seclusion that feels worlds away from the city.

The real draw of Duneland Beach is the shoreline itself: wide, pristine stretches of sugar-fine sand and a noticeably private atmosphere. It's a tranquil haven that captures the raw, natural beauty of the dunes without the crowds.

Homes situated in the woods offer surprising value, while the luxury estates along Millionaires Row can top $4M.




Part 2
LIVING INDIANA
THE DUNES

Living in the Dunes

THE PEOPLE

What all the shoreline communities share: proximity to one of the most underappreciated natural environments in the Midwest, reasonable distance from Chicago, and community character shaped — quietly, over decades — by people who chose to be here.

That last part is worth sitting with. The communities along this shoreline weren't built for people seeking status. They grew up around people who found something here and stayed. The retired scientists. The Chicago professionals who did the commute for twenty years and then stopped commuting. The legacy working-class families. The artists. The people who came for a summer and discovered that leaving was harder than they expected.

That mix — eccentric, unpretentious, genuinely diverse — is not an accident. It's the cumulative result of people making a deliberate choice.





Living in the Dunes

OUTDOORS

There are two world-class parks in the region: Indiana Dunes National Park and Indiana Dunes State Park. Visitors often confuse the two.

The state park has a real, wait-in-line entrance; the national park does not. The state park is situated between Porter Beach and Beverly Shores The national park is organized into numerous units along the shoreline and off shore. Pinhook Bog is in La Porte County, The Heron Rookery, in Jackson Township. Even locals don't universally know that the state park is situated *within* the national park.

Millions of visitors come to enjoy the parks each year, but congestion is limited to the very best weekends of summer. Even then, only the public beaches and most popular trails are crowded.

In the Dunes, there's always a quiet corner within easy reach.

Living in the Dunes
OUTDOORS

Beyond the shoreline lies a staggering biodiversity—ranking among the top five most diverse units in the entire National Park System. Nature enthusiasts can spend the morning conquering a massive sand blowout and the afternoon just minutes away in the silent, cool shade of a boreal forest.

Hikers find an endless variety of trails in the area's parks and preserves. Kayakers ply the waters of Lake Michigan or the quiet, tree-canopied Little Calumet River. As a premier migratory flyway, the region draws birders from around the globe.

The beauty of the Indiana Dunes is its layered complexity. In this region, the "world-class" label isn't just about the scenery—it's about the sheer variety of ways to lose (and find) yourself in the wild.



outdoor Indiana Dunes by the numbers

20,000 + Acres

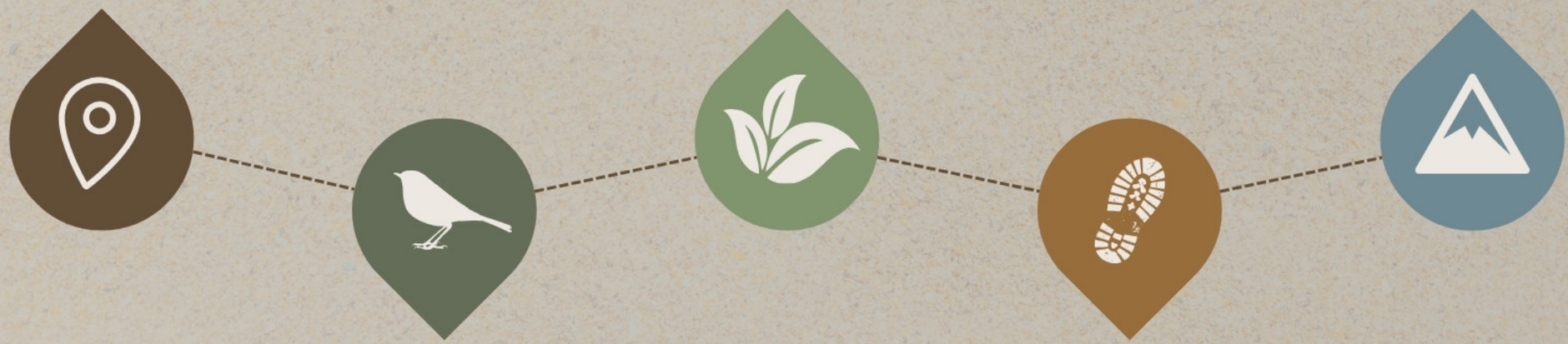
Between the big parks, and private nature preserves, there's always a place to find your quiet corner.

1,100 Plant Species

Ranks #4 among national parks, with more native orchids than Hawaii.

Highest Point: Mt. Tom

Mt. Tom (Indiana Dunes State Park) offers sweeping views to Lake Michigan.



350 + Bird Species

A premier Midwest destination for birding throughout the year.

70+ Miles of Hiking Trails

Ranges from easy boardwalks to rugged dune climbs.



Living in the Dunes

PROPERTY TAXES

This is where the comparisons to Illinois and Michigan's Harbor Country shift meaningfully.

Indiana's property tax structure imposes caps at 1% of assessed value for residential property. The practical result is that the average tax bill in Indiana is often much lower than what a comparable property in Cook County or Harbor Country might carry.

On average, the typical effective property tax rates in Illinois run about 1.8% to 2.0% of a home's **value**. In Michigan, the rate is roughly 1.2% to 1.4%, depending on location. In Indiana, the rate is more like 0.7% to 0.8%.

There are many factors that determine a property tax bill—and comparing across state lines can be tricky—but tax savings can be a real advantage to buying in Indiana.

Living in the Dunes

COMMUTING

For many, the Indiana Dunes is no longer just a weekend retreat; it's a primary residence made possible by a changing world. Recent upgrades to the South Shore Line have intersected with increasing flexibility in the professional workforce, effectively shrinking the distance between the quiet of the lake and the energy of the Loop.

This synergy has transformed the region into a viable "home base" for those who want to trade high-rise views for dune-top vistas without sacrificing their careers.

The South Shore Line provides reliable service between Chicago's Millennium Station and South Bend, with key stops threaded throughout the Dunes corridor. Following massive infrastructure investments, the commute is faster and more frequent than ever.

If you prefer to steer your own ship, the drive typically runs between 50 and 70 minutes, depending on the whims of the highway and weather. For those willing to pay the hefty toll, the Chicago Skyway provides a time-saving alternative.

The logistics are manageable, and the technology makes it seamless. But a word of caution to the prospective resident: once you arrive in the Dunes, it becomes very hard to leave. The hardest part of the commute isn't the traffic on the Skyway or the wait for the train—it's the magnetic pull of the shoreline that makes every departure feel just a little bit premature.



Living in the Dunes

FOUR SEASONS

The Indiana Dunes exists in a unique microclimate moderated by Lake Michigan. This "lake effect" creates a weather pattern that distinguishes the region sharply from the rest of the state—and even nearby Chicago.

Spring arrives late along the water—heralded by the chorus of spring peepers in the marshes and Sand Hill cranes overhead. By May, wild lupine carpets the region in shades of violet, a highlight of the dunes' year-long succession of wildflowers.



While Indiana summers are famously humid and hot, the Dunes offer a reprieve. On sweltering days, a steady lake breeze can keep the shoreline roughly 10 degrees cooler than points inland. This natural AC makes the dunes the ultimate summer escape.

Fall may be the finest season in the dunes. As the heat fades, the black oak savannas turn a deep, burnished gold and rust. The crisp air is perfect for hiking the ridge-top trails without the summer humidity, and the fall bird migration brings a second wave of activity to the skies.

In winter, the lake's thermal mass keeps the immediate shoreline slightly warmer than the rest of the county, but it also brings the legendary lake-effect snow. Some years, this results in a winter wonderland of deep drifts and shelf ice formations along the beach that look like an arctic tundra.

While road clearing in shoreline communities is diligent, the sheer volume of lake-effect powder can be a challenge—though nothing a four-wheel-drive and a bit of patience can't overcome.


Part 3
FINDING YOUR PLACE



finding your place

INSIDER'S EDGE

One thing that distinguishes the Indiana Dunes market from most: the properties worth having often don't behave like normal inventory.

Turnover on the shoreline is low by design — the people who find their place here tend to stay. When properties do change hands, they frequently do so in ways that are invisible to standard online searches: off-market sales. Pre-market conversations. So-called whisper listings.

Bridging what's publicly listed and what's actually possible requires someone who'inside the market. It requires relationships built over time — and the perspective to recognize the right opportunity when it appears.

That's what I offer.

finding your place

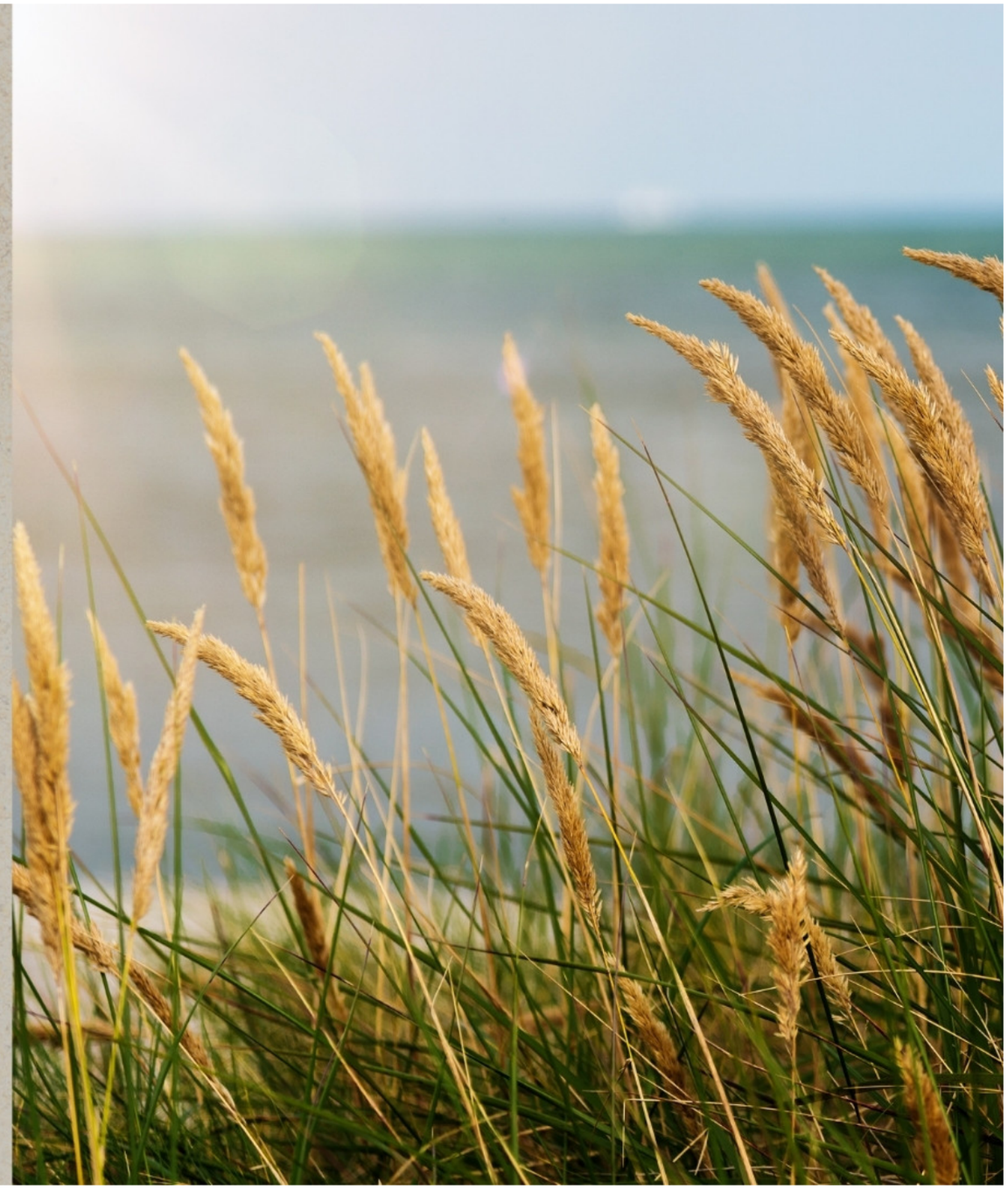
PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

I understand the Indiana Dunes market from a buyer's point of view — not just geographically, but personally.

My earliest memories were made here, in the dunes. But like many people, I eventually left — for school, for a career, for the opportunities that come with city life.

Years later, when it came time to think about what came next, the dunes kept calling. I wrestled with the same questions many buyers face: what you're gaining, what you're leaving behind, and what really matters.

That experience changed how I see this place — and how I guide others who feel that same pull toward the shoreline.





finding your place

BID-TO-CLOSE SERVICE

I provide a fully tailored, personal experience designed for buyers navigating a transition — from across town or across the country.

ACCESS

I know what's available before it lists — through the @properties network, through relationships with owners and agents built over years, and through the kind of local presence that means I hear things before they're public.

STRATEGY

I understand how this market is priced, where the value is, and how to position an offer that's taken seriously. That matters here.

EXECUTION

Once you find the right place, the transaction should be invisible — nothing dropped, nothing late, no moment where you're not sure what's happening. That's what I deliver.

Every step, handled with the care this decision deserves.

If you've read this far, this place is probably already doing something to you.

That's how it tends to work.

Whether you're seeking a seasonal retreat or a permanent change of pace, finding your place in the Indiana Dunes takes more than a search. It takes someone who knows what isn't listed, and who understands what you're really looking for.

The right home may not always be visible.
But it's within reach.

Let's begin the conversation.

— Bonnie







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