
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Expedition - August 13, 2016

Safety Plan

Participants should be fully independent and self-sufficient for the entire tour. This means they must have the skill, equipment, and endurance for a one-day, 20-plus-mile paddle along the shoreline of Lake Michigan from Gary, IN to Michigan City, Indiana.

Required equipment: A sea kayak with watertight bulkheads (or suitable flotation) is required. Deck lines are highly recommended. Canoes with secured full bow and stern flotation are permitted. All vessels will be safety checked prior to the start of the event.

Participants must wear a USCG-approved life jacket or inflatable belt, and a spray skirt. They must also carry a signaling device, such as a whistle and a signaling mirror, as well as a working communication device, such as a cell phone or VHF radio. They should also have a pump or other water vessel to empty water. A compass or GPS and a chart of the area are recommended. It's also advisable that all participants bring a basic boat repair kit and personal first aid kit.

Participants should also bring along all the fluids and food for the paddle. A sun hat and sunscreen are strongly recommended. Bring along clothing that will protect you in case of wind, rain or other change in the weather.

What to expect: Participants will paddle in the exposed waters of Lake Michigan where conditions can vary dramatically throughout the day. Occasionally the water can be very rough, with strong winds and high waves. Hazards exist along much of the course (seawalls, breakwaters, piers, heavily industrialized areas, pleasure boat traffic, and shipping channels). Waves can reflect off seawalls and become chaotic and much larger. See the map and detailed course description for particularly hazardous areas with high boat traffic. Unless you have solid experience in difficult conditions with the boat you plan to use, you should not participate in this event.

Segments of the tour: There will be four mandatory check-in points at each stop along the route. Check-in points are at Wells Street Beach (Gary), Portage Lakefront & Riverwalk, Indiana Dunes State Park and Lake View IDNL – (Beverly Shores area). Short breaks are planned for each of these stops.

This paddle course is suitable only for advanced paddlers—those who can keep up a 3 mph pace for eight hours a day. (Paddlers who can't maintain that pace won't meet the minimum speed requirements to be able to complete the tour in its entirety. Those who are not able to maintain this pace will be required to drop out of the tour at the check-in stops.) There will be a ride available for those who are unable to complete the paddle at each of the designated check points.

Leaving the tour: Paddlers who need to leave the tour must do so at one of the check-in stops. If they are unable to make it to one of these stops, they must contact the nearest

safety person. Then they must notify an expedition official at the check-in point or call 219.871.9559 to report their departure from the tour. On water safety boaters will also be used to assist.

Shuttles will be available to move paddlers and boats between check-in points.

Emergency landings: Beaches can be used for emergency landings. There are some stretches where no landing is possible: around the 3 mile stretch at the Port of Indiana from Portage to Burns Harbor.

Rescues: Participants must be able to execute a self-rescue. They are also expected to rescue fellow paddlers, if needed. If a paddler is unable to continue in the tour, fellow paddlers are expected to accompany the paddler to the nearest check-in stop or safety boater (Safety boaters will wear orange vests and carry communication equipment.) There will be two safety vessels that will be used to assist.

During the tour, a lead boat, two flanks, as well as a sweep will be used. Several safety kayakers will be assigned within the group as well. In the event of a paddler having a problem, they will be asked to raise their paddle to assist the on-water support boats and alert fellow paddlers about the issue.

Disqualification: The Tour of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore officials reserves the right to deny registration to any individual or boat. They may also disqualify any participant before or during the event for insufficient equipment, unsafe operation, disregard for event rules, or inappropriate behavior.

Check-in stop officials have the right to evaluate and disqualify any paddler who appears severely fatigued, injured or otherwise unable to safely complete the expedition. All paddlers must be at least 18 years of age at the date of event or be accompanied by an adult.

The Tour events will end at 6 p.m. (likely latest time) at the Boat Ramps at Washington Park (Six on the Lake, Michigan City). All remaining crafts on the water after this time will be escorted to the finish. Paddlers wishing to be part of the tour must follow the days schedule and make all of the stops while on the water. Paddlers who bypass a stop & break from the group will no longer be disqualified from the tour.

In the event of bad weather, the tour safety committee may decide to interrupt the event or reschedule the tour at to an alternative date.

Note: This policy is subject to change. Please check back prior to event day to ensure that you and your craft will be compliant.

Other notes

VHF radios Channel _____ will be used.