

'The Year of the Books' On the Indiana Dunes

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The struggle to preserve the Indiana Dunes began well before the turn of the 20th Century and culminated in 1966 with the creation of an Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The classic struggle between conflicting land use values – between the forces of economic development and preservation – continues today, 60 years after creation of the Indiana Dunes State Park and almost 20 years after the National Lakeshore was born.

To understand the Dunes today and to manage its resources one must understand its past, not only its natural history but its human and political history as well.

While voluminous literature on the Dunes exists, 1983 has turned out to be the year of new books. A theologian has written *Sacred Sands*, two longtime residents of the dunes have authored *Duel for the Dunes*, and the Eastern National Park and Monument Association has published *The Indiana Dunes*. I highly recommend all three. The lessons to be learned from this park's history can serve us all well in meeting the challenges of present day park management.

J. Ronald Engel's book, *Sacred Sands, the Struggle for Community in the Indiana Dunes*, was released this spring (Wesleyan University Press, \$22.95). Kay Franklin and Norma Schaeffer's book *Duel for the Dunes, Land Use Conflict on the Shores of Lake Michigan*, will be published soon (University of Illinois Press, \$18.95). Both books concern the long, often bitterly fought, battle that has pitted preservationists against industry, Illinois against Indiana, and very often the people against their own elected representatives. Both books chronicle the struggle's long and significant cast of characters – Stephen Mather, poet Carl Sandburg, ecologist Henry Cowles, landscape architect Jens Jensen, Hull House's Jane Addams, former Illinois Sen. Paul H. Douglas, and many more.

The books do not, however, duplicate each other. Dr. Engel writes from the viewpoint of the philosopher and theologian. The dunes preservation movement is

treated as part of the Midwest's Progressive movement, as a "... battleground in the struggle for social justice and environmental preservation." He concentrates on the early years – the artists, poets, scientists, social reformers, and thinkers. His book explains why so many people have fought for so long a period and with such devotion for their dunes. For them, the dunes are a sacred symbol; the save-the-dunes movement is a laic religion.

Kay Franklin and Norma Schaeffer, both residents of the town of Beverly Shores, now surrounded by the National Lakeshore, are less philosophical, more pragmatic. Fuller treatment is given to politicians and bureaucrats. The book takes a closer look at the history of the dunes since authorization of the Lakeshore, including its present management, conflicts over further expansion, and NPS proposals for planning and development.

Although the first NPS Director, Stephen Mather, was intensely involved in movements to establish a Sand Dunes National Park, the victories of preservation were won by the people. Indeed, the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior are treated in this book as "reluctant allies" in the struggle. We who like to think always of ourselves as wearing unblemished white hats may cringe somewhat at this characterization, but it is not without foundation.

The Indiana Dunes (Eastern Acorn Press, \$3.95), written by the Lakeshore's chief interpreter, Larry Waldron, with photographs by former interpreter Robert Daum, sets forth the benefits of the preservation victories. The land, the lake, the plants, the dunes and bogs – all are described and illustrated. The book concentrates on natural history, showing why the dunes are often referred to as the birthplace of ecology in North America and how, in its present day land forms, one finds the history of continental glaciation better exemplified than anywhere else.

Yet even this book, with its accent on natural history, cannot ignore the human factor. The people's relation to the land, part and parcel of the natural history story, is summarized in the chapter on "People," introduced by a 1958 picture of Sen. Paul H. Douglas, campaigning from the front seat of a jeep to Save the Dunes.