West Beach Historic District | Porter County, Indiana
Name of Property | County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: West Beach Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing**:** N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

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2. Location

Street & number: _376 North County Line Road_____

City or town: Portage_____ State: Indiana___County: Porter_____

Not For Publication: [ ] Vicinity: [X]

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide _X__local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_A ___B __X__C ___D

West Beach Historic District
Name of Property

Porter County, Indiana
County and State

Federal Preservation Officer — March 14, 2025

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

National Park Service

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

3/11/2025

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Assistant Dir. of Pres. Services — Indiana Div. of Hist. Pres. & Archaeo.

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

_x_ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

James Gabbert — 4.29.2025

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: ☐

Public – Local ☐

Public – State ☐

Public – Federal [X]

Category of Property

Building(s) [ ]

District [X]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
1	0	sites
9	0	structures
0	0	objects
13	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Park/National Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Brutalism

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Walls: Brick
Concrete

WOOD: Weatherboard
OTHER: Cement Fiber Board

Foundation: Concrete

Roof: Synthetics

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The West Beach Historic District (WBHD) at Indiana Dunes National Park, constructed on the shores of Lake Michigan between 1976 and 1981, consists of thirteen contributing resources (see Map 1). West Beach is located at the west end of the national park in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of North County Line Road and West Beach Road (see Map 2). Designed by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, the thirteen contributing resources in the district are the Brutalist West Beach Bathhouse (WBB, 1976), eight Picnic Area Shelters (1980), a 600+ car parking lot that was part of the original plan, the Visitor Contact Station (1981), Picnic Area Restrooms (1981), and a 59.33-acre contributing site (see Figure 1). The district retains all seven aspects of integrity, most to an excellent degree. The overall integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association are superb and accurately show the planning completed in 1974 by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. The design, workmanship, and material integrity specifically for the Visitor Contact Station and Picnic Area Restrooms have been slightly compromised with the addition of new siding. The district is significant under Criterion A (Entertainment/Recreation) and Criterion C (Architecture) at the local level. While the WBB is the most recent bathhouse on Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline, the bathhouse at Indiana Dunes State Park was constructed first and is larger.

Setting & Plan

Running along the southernmost shore of Lake Michigan, West Beach encompasses over 663 acres between the communities of Miller Beach to the west and Ogden Dunes to the east (see Map 3). West Beach is only one part of the national park, which includes over 15,000 acres of

parkland and fifteen miles of beaches in noncontiguous parcels along the shore for purposes of outdoor recreation and preservation of rare ecosystems (see Photos 1–9). Initially authorized as a national lakeshore in 1966, Indiana Dunes became a national park in 2019.

Access to West Beach is via West Beach Road, northeast of the intersection of US 12 and North County Line Road. The road meanders through grassland/wetland, forest, and a seasonal lake (Long Lake) as it curves northeast approximately one mile before reaching the expansive parking lot and the southern end of the WBHD (see Photo 33). Divided into north and south halves, the parking lot accesses the Picnic Area Shelters and Picnic Area Restrooms from its south half, while the north half connects to the Visitor Contact Station and WBB (see Photos 32–39). At the northwest corner of the north parking lot is the Visitor Contact Station, a cement-fiber-sided building that mimics the design of the larger WBB (see Photo 40). Just east of this building is a paved walkway, set amidst sand dunes, that curves to the northwest for 0.02 miles, past a small pond within an inter-dunal depression on the east side, and ending at the WBB (see Photo 8). The entrance drive and trails contribute to the historic district's integrity of setting by providing circulation, views, and open space that situate the visitor infrastructure in the midst of an accessible natural and recreational environment.

West Beach Bathhouse (WBB) Contributing

Located at the north end of West Beach, the seasonal Brutalist WBB functions as the sole bathhouse on West Beach and contains men's and women's restrooms, showers, and changing rooms; a concession stand; first aid and lifeguard services; and two sheltered picnic/rest areas. Built in 1976 and designed by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff, the concrete and brick building features a synthetic flat roof punctured by eight 12' shed-roofed, precast-concrete projections with fixed, angled clerestory windows. While the sharp angles of the Brutalist building contrast with the gentle rises of the setting, the materials and colors of the building help it blend with the landscape (see Photos 11–31).

The WBB has a small two-bay lower utility/storage area settled into the dune and centered under the building (see Map 4; Photo 20). The utility/storage area and a series of concrete piers that expand under the sand support the elevated concrete-slab foundation. The asymmetrical building has an ethylene propylene diene terpolymer flat roof punctured by eight large asphalt-coated, shed-roofed concrete projections with fixed, angled clerestory windows (see Photos 11 and 12). These are the only windows in the entire building. The walls throughout the structure are deep red brick with cast exposed-aggregate concrete beltcourses that surround the entire building at the top and bottom of each wall. The beltcourses protrude slightly from the brick wall surface, adding depth to the building (see Photo 13).

The WBB comprises a series of 27'6" by 27'6" blocks arranged to form two matching wings. This is visible by bisecting the plan along a north–south line extending along the west kneewall of the south entry and then rotating one-half of the building 180 degrees (see Figure 2). The west wing contains the men's restrooms, showers, and changing rooms, and the east wing contains those for women.

The blocks are delineated on the exterior by the large exposed-aggregate piers evenly spaced around the building and set into angled recesses in the brickwork. Each pier consists of two

vertical pieces that were poured separately, stacked upon one another, and connected at the elevated main floor level. The lower beltcourse meets the piers at this level and covers the connections of the two separate pieces to give the impression of a single pier running the full height of the building and sinking into the sand. Both the upper and lower beltcourses have crenellations with copper flashing covering the downward-sloping surface of each void of the crenellations. The piers also have integrated drainage with scuppers sending stormwater into the sand below (see Photo 19).

Exterior—South Façade

From the paved walkway, the south façade has a trapezoid-shaped, sloped, precast-concrete plank deck (approximately 50' long) flanked by concrete kneewalls that narrow at the open entry into the bathhouse (see Photos 11 and 12). The kneewalls are constructed from the same exposed-aggregate concrete as the building. A pair of short concrete piers to the west side of the west kneewall form a buttress to support the ramp. Matching crenellations form a capital for these piers, at the same height as the bases of the full-height piers. The brick walls have concrete beltcourses at the top and bottom of each wall segment.

The bays on each side of the building are numbered from left to right. There are six bays on the north and south façades and five on the east and west sides (see Figure 3 for an illustration of how bays are numbered). Of the six bays of the south façade, four bays (Bays 1, 3, 4, and 5) run along the same setback. One bay (Bay 2) projects out from this plane by one bay, and the last bay (Bay 6) recesses back by one bay (see Photos 12 and 17). Bays 1, 2, 4, and 5 are identical with solid, deep red, running-bond brick walls with chamfered corners to accommodate the exposed-aggregate piers. All the chamfered corners on the exterior of the building have louvered metal vents in the top third of the wall. Bay 3 is a continuation of the plank deck and has flanking kneewalls leading into the internal east–west corridor of the WBB. The roof extends over this bay and provides a place for visitors' eyes to adjust from the bright sunlight and sand of the park before entering the core of the building. Bay 6 is intended as a picnic/rest area and is open on two sides. Its roof is a series of precast-concrete beams open to the outdoors but offering some shelter. The south and east walls do not have brick filling the wall spaces (see Photos 17 and 18).

West Side

Note: Photographs of the entire west side are not possible because Pitcher's thistle, a federally protected plant species, grows in the adjacent dunes, preventing access to locations that allow for better photographic opportunities.

The west side consists of five bays, although Bay 1 sits beyond the north walkway and is part of the east wing. For the purposes of the exterior description, it will be included here. It consists of the same deep red, running-bond brick walls with chamfered corners and cast exposed-aggregate concrete beltcourses and piers as the rest of the building. Bays 2 and 5 run along the same setback, while Bays 3 and 4 project forward one bay (see Photo 13). The walls of Bays 2, 4, and 5 match that of Bay 1, while Bay 3 has the concrete beltcourses and kneewalls of the open picnic/rest area. Bay 4 is the only bay on the west side that has shed-roofed, precast-concrete and glass projections on the roof that faces west.

North Façade

The north façade of the building is an exact replica of the south façade, with six bays in the same order and materials as the south façade (see Photo 15). Additionally, Bay 2 also has the shed-roofed, precast-concrete and glass projection (see Photo 16). The precast-concrete plank walkway leading from Bay 3 is longer than the one on the south side (approximately 150' long) but is made from the same materials and has the same form as the south one. This walkway is flanked on both sides of the kneewalls with the same short concrete piers found on the south walkway, except these run the entire length of the path (five per side) until it widens to meet the top set of stairs. The approach widens into a trapezoidal shape with a large wood staircase descending to a wood landing before a second set of wood stairs reaches the beach (see Photo 14). The wood stairs end approximately 75' from the water. These wood elements are erosion barriers and are less expensive to replace after the inevitable damage caused by the elements.

East Side

Note: Photographs of the entire east side are not possible because Pitcher's thistle, a federally protected plant species, grows in the adjacent dunes, preventing access to locations that allow for better photographic opportunities.

The east side of the building is an exact replica of the west side with five bays in the same order and materials of the west side. Bay 1 sits back beyond the south walkway and is part of the west wing. Bay 4 has a shed-roofed, precast-concrete and glass projection that faces east (see Photos 17 and 18).

Roof Features

Eight 12'-tall, asphalt-coated, shed-roofed concrete projections with fixed, angled clerestory windows are on the roof of the WBB (see Photos 1 and 2). The locations of four of these have been previously discussed. The other four are arranged over the four central bays above the interior corridor of the building. They face south like the one on top of Bay 2 on the south façade.

Lower Storage Area

While the clerestory windows are centered above the interior corridor, the two-bay lower storage/utility area is centered below it and measures approximately 55' by 27'6" (see Photo 20). It is visible from a staff-only access path to the west of the building that slopes down into the inter-dunal recess. The public cannot see it because of the surrounding sand dunes. The walls are concrete.

Interior

The north and south access points each enter perpendicularly to the single-bay-wide east–west corridor that terminates with the picnic/rest areas at each end (see Photos 22 and 23). Both entrances, both picnic/rest areas, the concession stand, and first aid/lifeguard services can be closed from the interior corridor by full-size metal louvered roll-up doors (see Photo 25). Smaller access points around piers at the entrances and picnic/rest areas have been filled with metal vertical gates (see Photos 22, 23, 24 at left, 25 at left and far right). Interior finishes in the corridor include poured-concrete floors incised to look like 3'6" by 6' tiles and the same brick and concrete that is present on the exterior walls and ceiling. Although the 27'6" blocks are more clearly delineated on the interior, particularly with the various room openings and the light-well

openings in the ceiling, the concrete piers also break up the expanses of brick wall to divide the corridor just like on the exterior. The piers are surrounded by triangular, exposed-aggregate concrete kneewalls that project out into the corridor. The four bays of the corridor each contain a light-well that illuminates the space from above, resulting in limited exposed ceiling surface. The interior wall surfaces of the light-wells have the same concrete panels as the exterior.

Interior Room Arrangement

As previously stated, the men's restrooms, showers, and changing room are located in the west wing, while the women's facilities are in the east wing. Moving clockwise around the corridor from the south entrance are the men's changing rooms, showers, and restrooms (see Photos 26–29). Access to this suite is through the main solid metal entry doors off the corridor. The changing rooms take up two bays south of the entrance, while the showers and restrooms share a bay to the west. Finishes in all areas include deep red brick and concrete walls with poured-concrete floors. Benches are located around the perimeter of each changing room, with three additional ones in the middle. One of the shed-roofed clerestory windows illuminates the outer bay (see Photo 27). The showers have free-standing shower poles in the middle of the room, each with four showerheads, and additional showers mounted on one wall (see Photo 29). The restrooms have metal toilet stalls, urinals, modern multi-faucet porcelain sinks, mirrors, hand dryers, and additional fluorescent tube lights on the walls above the sinks (see Photo 28). The bay for the showers and restrooms is also topped by one of the shed-roofed clerestory windows.

At the west end of the corridor and sharing a wall with the bay of the men's showers and restrooms is a picnic/rest area. The picnic/rest area is open to the outdoors on the west and north sides and to the interior corridor on the east; only the south side is a full brick wall. The floor is poured concrete, and the roof element is a series of concrete beams forming a pergola-like effect.

There are two blocks of rooms on the north side of the interior corridor in the west wing. The western block is divided in half, with the west side serving as additional restrooms for men. There are urinals, stalls, and sinks like those in the previously described restroom with brick and concrete walls, poured-concrete floors, and a concrete ceiling. The remaining one-and-one-half blocks serve as storage, first aid, and lifeguard services. All have brick and concrete walls, poured-concrete floors, and concrete ceilings. The area sharing a wall with the restroom now serves as a storage area. Access to the adjacent lifeguard area to the east is through a doorway midway along the eastern wall of brick and concrete. The lifeguard area can also be accessed from the interior corridor via a large metal louvered roll-up door. Some interior walls within the lifeguard area have been covered in plywood or drywall (see Photo 30).

The dividing line between the east and west wings is between the first aid and lifeguard services rooms and the north access to the WBB (see Photo 21). The opening incorporates most of the wall surface and is topped by a full-size, metal, louvered, roll-up door to close off public access to the interior. East of the entrance are the women's changing rooms, restrooms, and showers. Like the men's facilities, access to all three is through the main entry off the corridor. The interior arrangement and materials are the same. One of the shed-roofed clerestory windows illuminates the outer bay of the women's changing rooms. The showers have free-standing shower poles in the middle of the room, each with four showerheads, and additional showers mounted on one wall. The restrooms have metal toilet stalls, modern multi-faucet porcelain

sinks, mirrors, hand dryers, and additional fluorescent tube lights on the walls above the sinks. The bay for the showers and restrooms is also topped by one of the shed-roofed clerestory windows.

At the east end of the corridor and sharing a wall with the bay of the women's showers and restrooms is another picnic/rest area. It matches the arrangement and materials of the picnic/rest area previously described (see Photo 24).

The final two blocks of the east wing hold additional women's restrooms, storage/systems, and the concession stand. The restrooms are located on the east side of the east block and match the previously described restroom with brick and concrete walls, poured-concrete floors, and a concrete ceiling. The other half block is storage and mechanical systems for the building. The final block is the concession stand. All have brick and concrete walls, poured-concrete floors, and concrete ceilings. There are some concrete-block and drywall surfaces (see Photo 31). The concession stand can also be accessed via the internal corridor by a large metal louvered roll-up door.

The WBB has excellent architectural integrity and largely appears as it did when constructed in 1976. There have been minor upgrades to infrastructure in the changing rooms and updated fixtures in the bathrooms. The materials are also in good condition.

Parking Lot Contributing

The 600+ space parking lot dominates the area south of the WBB, despite being one-third of the size noted in the Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff plan (see Photos 32–35, 39). The asphalt-covered area is divided into northern and southern sections with a wedge-shaped section of grass running east–west between the two. The lots gently curve to the northeast along West Beach Road. The parking areas are buffered on the east side by strips of grass/vegetation with a second strip running west of center (see Photo 33). The north lot has three double rows and four single rows of parking for cars, while the south lot has three double rows and three single rows for cars. The westernmost row in the south lot is diagonal parking for buses.

The parking lot has good architectural integrity and appears as it did when constructed in 1976. It is a contributing structure.

Visitor Contact Station Contributing

Designed by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff and constructed in 1981, this elevated single-story, cement-fiber-sided building is a contributing building (see Figure 4; Photo 40). It was originally built of stained vertical cedar siding. Accessed via a set of wood steps with open risers and flanked by sided kneewalls, the building mimics elements of the larger WBB. Deep covered recesses connect the east and west sections of the building. The roof lines of both sections replicate the shape of the clerestory window roof features of the WBB, although no windows are present. On the west portion, the flat roof is to the south and the roof tapers north, while those elements are reversed on the east section. Four steel and glass doors offer access to the west section, and a set of three awning windows with fixed sashes above and operable sashes

below is found on the west side. This section was originally intended as an information center offering maps, brochures, interpretation, and other information for park visitors. Today it is a multi-functional space for staff as various events or needs occur. The east section houses the year-round restrooms and has a set of three awning windows set high within recessed segments on the north and south walls. Another recessed wall segment with two awning windows and a central metal service door is on the east side.

Despite the replacement siding, the Visitor Contact Station is contributing.

Picnic Area Restrooms Non-Contributing

Located west of the southern portion of the parking lot is the West Beach Picnic Area, which consists of a restroom facility and eight picnic shelters (see Figure 5). Constructed in 1981, the Picnic Area Restrooms building sits at the north side of the picnic area loop and faces south (see Photos 35, 36, and 38). Connected to the parking lot via paved accessible walkways, the building was originally constructed of vertical brown cedar siding but has since been covered in tan cement-fiber board. The form of the building is nearly identical to the east wing of the Visitor Contact Station. The only difference other than the exterior cladding is that the restroom doors are recessed on the tall, wide elevation (south) rather than the side elevation. It has the same flat-to-angled shed roof, recessed segments of side walls for a band of three narrow awning windows, and a similar recess for two matching narrow awning windows on the back (north) wall.

Like the Visitor Contact Station, the Picnic Area Restrooms are contributing despite the replacement siding.

Picnic Area Shelters (8) Contributing

The West Beach Picnic Area includes eight identical covered picnic shelters constructed in 1980 and connected by walkways (see Figure 5). Seven of these structures are within a generally circular set of pathways consisting of sand and shell (see Photos 35, 36, 37). One shelter at the south end of the circle is outside the pathway. All the shelters are identical with concrete floors, vertical brown cedar siding, and flat roofs. Four matching corner posts support the rectangular flat roof, allowing for exposed rafter tails. A narrow L-shaped bay divides the structure along the narrow width of the shelter to offer space for two separate picnic tables. The outward facing surface of the bay has a matching vertical brown-cedar-sided door on both ends, and a matching wall runs between, forming the long leg of the L. All the shelters have an outdoor post-style grill set in the concrete floor. The two shelters closest to the restroom building have a paved walkway around the structure. The other six shelters have a wood boardwalk on all four sides.

The Picnic Area Shelters retain good architectural integrity, with their original materials.

Site Contributing

The WBHD consists of one contributing site consisting of 59.33 acres that exhibits various cultural landscape characteristics including spatial organization, land use, circulation, natural systems/features, and vegetation. The north end abuts Lake Michigan and has approximately 0.3

miles of beach directly accessed via the WBB. It is the most heavily used beach within the national park (see Photos 1 and 2). South of the beach, a series of sand dunes extends about 0.25 miles, with peaks and voids in a constant state of flux from the wind and sand. The WBB is tucked into one of these voids. Beyond the dunes, the land opens up and offers flat areas before extending farther south outside of the WBHD into the marshy area around Long Lake.

The spatial organization of the southern coast of Lake Michigan in Indiana offers a unique environment. The impact of intense wind and the force of water impacts the formation of sand dunes along the shoreline. Unfortunately, the industrial and residential development along Indiana's Lake Michigan coast has resulted in only small fragments of natural areas for the dunes to develop. By creating Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (IDNL) in 1966 and acquiring the land that became West Beach in 1968, a small portion of the rare and rapidly disappearing spatial organization of this natural feature was preserved.[1]

The original plan (see Figure 1) can be compared to the 2024 Indiana Dunes National Park trail map (see Figure 6) to show how the spatial organization of West Beach today reflects the 1974 plan. Comparing the 1974 plan and the 2024 trail map also shows that despite some deviations, land use has overallremained the same. Authorization of IDNL in 1966 and acquisition of the land that became West Beach from Inland Steel in 1968 preserved portions of the dunes and allowed public access to the lakeshore. Development of the bathhouse area improved public access to the lakeshore for recreation, which continues to be a primary use of the WBHD. The circulation patterns established by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff's plan included an entry gate and a main access road at the southwestern corner of the property that meandered easterly through marshlands and seasonal Long Lake before turning north into the flat open space that would be dedicated to a massive parking area shielded from the beach and water by the sand dunes. The district boundary does not include the full extent of the access road because its alignment differs from the 1974 plan. A paved service road and walkway connected the northern end of the parking lot to the WBB with offshoots for hiking trails to the east (see Photos 6, 8, and 9). Additional hiking trails were designed west of the parking lot and built around 1983, outside of the period of significance (see Photo 10). The original plan called for grassed open areas on either side of the parking lot interspersed with open day use areas and picnic areas.

The historic district is centered on the bathhouse, picnic area, and parking lot as the built resources that best represent the 1974 design plan, with the surrounding circulation providing setting for this vision, but lacking significance and integrity to the design plan and period of significance. The plan was laid out based on the contours of the land, and did not fully account for other environmental factors, such as gradients, interdunal ponds, and plant locations. As implementation of the plan required working around these factors, most trails were not placed in their original design locations and postdate the period of significance. In particular, the Long Lake trail differs significantly from the proposed alignment. All trails, including the Dune Succession Trail (which falls partially within the boundary), can shift due to dune movement and changing plant environments, and have experienced frequent material replacement, leading to a lack of integrity of location, materials, and workmanship over time. Thus, trails are part of the

[1] The park was a national lakeshore during the history discussed in this nomination. To avoid confusion, we will use the abbreviation IDNL for events before 2019 and spell out "Indiana Dunes National Park" for events since 2019.

district's setting and significance as a recreational site, but individual trails are not specifically called out as contributing elements to the West Beach Historic District.

The natural systems/features found at West Beach are everywhere. The water, lakeshore, beach, sand dunes, peaks and valleys, grasses, and trees all contribute to the cultural landscape here. These elements historically drew people to the area and continue to do so today. The natural systems/features are intact and have good integrity.

The vegetation in the WBHD defines the district and the landscape. It illustrates University of Chicago Botany Professor Henry Chandler Cowles's theories of plant succession and climax formation, with the landscape evolving from sand to grasses to shrubs to hardwood trees the farther away/more sheltered from the water one gets. Cowles's studies at the Indiana dunes brought attention from both the scientific community and members of the public through his publications and efforts for conservation and outdoor recreation. Interestingly, Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff took into account the vegetation with their plan and even noted a stand of jack pines at the northeast corner of the property (letter L on Figure 1). This forest still exists today, and native plants dominate the landscape providing additional integrity for the district. (see Photos 1-10, 32-37).

Given the outdoor nature and harsh environment of WBHD, it is expected that there would be some changes to the site. Dunes shift, vegetation grows, and water ebbs and flows. However, the designed elements of the site remain intact and in place as directed by the 1974 plan by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff and implemented by the National Park Service (NPS).

Integrity

The district also retains all seven aspects of integrity, most to an excellent degree. The overall integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association are superb and accurately show the planning completed in 1974 by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff. The design, workmanship, and material integrity specifically for the Visitor Contact Station and Picnic Area Restrooms have been compromised since construction. The WBB has excellent architectural integrity, inside and out, with only minor material alterations to interior spaces such as updates to restrooms and the introduction of new wall materials in non-public spaces for better functionality (lifeguard/first aid areas and concessions). The exterior material integrity of the Visitor Contact Station and Picnic Area Restrooms have been impacted by the introduction of new siding. However, this is relatively minor in comparison to the near original integrity in regard to location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association for not only these buildings but also the entire district.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [X] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1976–1981

Significant Dates

1976, 1977

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The WBHD consists of the WBB, Visitor Contact Station, Picnic Area Shelters, Picnic Area Restrooms, Parking Lot, and a contributing site. All features were included in the 1974 plan by Milwaukee architects Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff and were constructed between 1976 and 1981 for the NPS (see Figure 1). Significant dates include 1976, when West Beach opened, and 1977, when West Beach was officially dedicated. The WBHD is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) at the local level under Criterion A for entertainment/recreation and Criterion C for architecture. Locally, the WBHD is significant as a center for entertainment and recreation on the Lake Michigan lakeshore and as an outstanding example of Brutalist architecture. It exemplifies the key elements of Brutalism and also falls in line with the use of modern architecture styles to reflect a certain lakeshore aesthetic prevalent in Lake Michigan shore communities and as a fundamental building type found at the beach.

Criteria Consideration G is necessary for the WBHD because the resources within the district, though planned fifty years ago, were constructed between forty-five and forty-nine years ago. The WBHD has exceptional significance at the local level for fully embracing the modern architectural style of Brutalism to highlight the recreational nature of the unit. Additionally, the district and its associated visitor amenities represent the first and only comprehensively planned recreational lakefront unit within the national park. It was also essential to opening and retaining public access to the shoreline amidst the vast industrial and residential development on Lake Michigan.

Developmental History

The preservation of the Indiana dunes[2] on the shores of Lake Michigan was largely spearheaded by three individuals: University of Chicago Botany Professor Henry Chandler Cowles, later known as the "father of plant ecology"; teacher and seasonal resident Dorothy R. Buell; and Illinois Senator Paul H. Douglas.[3] Cowles and the unique, intricate ecosystem of the dunes gained notoriety internationally through publication of his *Ecological Relations of the Vegetation on Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan* in 1899. Cowles began conducting research in the area while a graduate student at the University of Chicago and continued to make regular teaching/research trips over the next thirty-five years.

Winds blowing across Lake Michigan from the northwest to southeast cause sand to accumulate on the southeastern shore, creating the dunes. This natural occurrence made the Indiana dunes the "largest freshwater coastal sand dunes in the world."[4] Despite the international awareness of the dunes, the constant battle between industry and natural preservation threatened the dunes landforms. Between 1890 and 1920, local industry carted away the entirety of the Hoosier Slide, the largest sand dune in the area sitting at over 200', to produce plate glass and mason jars.[5]

This mass removal of natural material from a unique environment was the catalyst for Cowles, Thomas Allinson, and Jens Jensen to form the Prairie Club of Chicago in 1911, of which Stephen Mather, future director of the NPS, was a member.[6] The Prairie Club was the first group to put forth the idea of conserving the Indiana dunes. In 1916, the year the NPS was established, Director Mather held local public meetings to gauge interest in creating a Sand Dunes National Park. Despite widespread support, World War I put the national park effort on hold. However, locals proceeded to form the National Dunes Park Association to continue the campaign.[7] In 1926, Indiana Dunes State Park was established through the efforts of Cowles and others.[8] However, it encompassed only about 2,000 acres, a relatively small portion of the entire lakeshore. The commitment remained for a national park.

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[2] The entire southern shore of Lake Michigan in Indiana was once covered in sand dunes. For the purpose of distinguishing between the sand dunes of Indiana and the sand dunes within Indiana Dunes National Park, Indiana dunes with a lowercase "d" will refer to the general sand dunes, while Indiana Dunes with a capital "D" will refer to the future/current state/national park. A similar approach is taken for distinguishing the lakeshore (lowercase "l") of Lake Michigan and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (capital "L").

[3] National Park Service (NPS), "History & Culture: History of Indiana Dunes National Park," accessed November 8, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/indu/learn/historyculture/index.htm.

[4] Jacqueline Alyse Mirandola Mullen, "Coastal Parks for a Metropolitan Nation: How Postwar Politics and Urban Growth Shaped America's Shores" (PhD Diss., University at Albany, State University of New York, 2015), 239.

[5] NPS, "History & Culture."

[6] Ron Cockrell, *A Signature of Time and Eternity: The Administrative History of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana* (Omaha: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Division of Cultural Resources Management, 1988), 17.

[7] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 18–20.

[8] Indiana Department of Natural Resources, "Indiana Dunes State Park," accessed June 7, 2023, https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/parks-lakes/indiana-dunes-state-park/.

Up to that point, the Department of the Interior had largely established grand parks with impressive vertical landscapes like Yosemite and Yellowstone. It was difficult to garner support for a site that was in the Midwest and horizontal with sand and swamps. The first flat national park authorized for its "biological uniqueness" was Everglades National Park in 1934.[9] Despite its own "biological uniqueness," much of the area of the Indiana dunes was marsh and only considered useful once it was filled in.[10] However, America's coasts, both seashore and lakeshore, were immensely popular with the public. After World War I, beach visits soared. More paved roads led to these oases, and people had the money and automobiles to take leisure day trips to the beach. However, less than 1 percent of the coastal lands were publicly owned, and they were underrepresented within the NPS portfolio. In 1936, Congress passed the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Study Act, adding "recreation" to the NPS mission and authorizing a study to evaluate potential coastal parks. Things were falling into place to start protecting shorelines under the NPS umbrella.

By the end of World War II in 1945, the NPS budget had fallen to one-seventh of what it had been in 1940, so the growth and condition of parks declined. Consequently, when GIs and their families surged to the national parks after the war ended, they found the parks in very rough shape. In response, the NPS created the Mission 66 program to revive the parks and to include the shorelines. A 1955 NPS report entitled "A Report on Our Vanishing Shoreline" was disseminated around the country and garnered immediate attention from those both for and against adding seashores and lakeshores to the National Park System. It prompted the formation of local groups with the time, money, and political connections to campaign for the conservation of these resources and environmentalism in general.[11] In 1958, Congress formed the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC), which consisted of politicians, industry representatives, conservation groups, and government leaders. The ORRRC was tasked with creating a forty-year comprehensive plan, of which the seashores and lakeshores were a component.[12]

Local resident Dorothy Buell became entrenched in the preservation of the dunes, first joining the Indiana Dunes Preservation Council in 1949 and assisting in the formation of Save the Dunes Council (STDC) in 1952. Her fundraising and campaigning efforts played a key role in the grassroots success that STDC had over the next several decades.[13] Buell was instrumental in getting Illinois Senator Paul Douglas to sponsor a bill for the dunes to become a national park.

When Indiana received federal funds to construct a "Port of Indiana" along the dunes, STDC, with Buell and Douglas, started a nationwide campaign to purchase some of the land in question, both to conserve the land and to attempt to prevent the construction of the Port. However, they were up against formidable opponents, including the State of Indiana, politicians, steel companies, and local residents. STDC purchased the 56 acres encompassing Cowles Bog in

[9] Mullen, "Coastal Parks for a Metropolitan Nation," 19–20.

[10] Mullen, "Coastal Parks for a Metropolitan Nation," 256.

[11] Mullen, "Coastal Parks for a Metropolitan Nation," 21–31.

[12] Mullen, "Coastal Parks for a Metropolitan Nation," 31–32.

[13] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 39.

1953, but the Port remained a looming threat.[14] In 1963–1964, the parties reached a compromise known as the Kennedy Compromise. It set aside 11,700 acres for a national lakeshore while allowing for the development of the Port of Indiana on the central dune east of Ogden Dunes (only 8,330 acres were included in the final authorizing legislation).[15] Many who had supported conservation of the entirety of the dunes, including Douglas, were disappointed with the deal and attributed it to the massive influence of steel companies in the area.[16] President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the bill authorizing IDNL on November 5, 1966.[17]

IDNL's first season for visitors was in 1969. At the post-season review, it was decided that "portable outhouses and a drinking fountain were needed."[18] IDNL was formally dedicated on September 20, 1972, six years after it was authorized and three years after it informally opened.[19] The land that would become West Beach was purchased from Inland Steel in 1968 and was "critical to the national lakeshore's development because as the largest single tract, it was the closest to Chicago and Gary and featured an outstanding beach."[20] West Beach opened in 1976 but was not dedicated until 1977.[21] Congress would eventually increase IDNL's size to more than 15,000 acres after four separate expansions between 1976 and 1986. In February 2019, IDNL became Indiana Dunes National Park.[22]

Entertainment/Recreation

The planning and development of IDNL occurred at the tail end of NPS Director Conrad Wirth's Mission 66 era, so the core goals of that effort—expanding visitor services and modernizing park architecture—carried over into the planning of West Beach, along with making the park more accessible for automobiles.[23] George B. Hartzog, Jr., NPS director from 1964 to 1972, built on the efforts of Mission 66 by creating "Parkscape USA," under which he expanded the number of parks, and "diversified and increased the parks' interpretive activities, particularly on environmental education and 'living history' presentations."[24] The WBHD was greatly

[14] NPS, "Dorothy Buell: Heroine of the Dunes," accessed June 23, 2023. https://www.nps.gov/people/dorothy-buell.htm.

[15] NPS, "Dorothy Buell."

[16] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 63–65.

[17] Mullen, "Coastal Parks for a Metropolitan Nation," 264.

[18] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 119.

[19] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 85, 161.

[20] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 95.

[21] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 237–83.

[22] NPS, "History & Culture."

[23] NPS, "Mission 66: Birth of the Modern National Park," accessed May 22, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/southfloridacollections/introduction-mission-66-exhibit.htm.

[24] NPS, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sellars/chap6a.htm.

influenced by both Mission 66 and Parkscape USA, even though it was not built out until 1974–1981.

The WBHD represents the first and only large-scale facility to be constructed at IDNL. According to NPS Historian Ron Cockrell,

> The significance of the opening of the long-awaited bathhouse was profound. The two-million-dollar project represented the first national lakeshore development for public use. Complete with parking for 600 cars and forty buses, the modern building featured showers, lockers, and a food service concessioner. Not since the bathhouse at the Dunes State Park opened in the 1930s had such a grand public facility appeared on Indiana's lakeshore.[25]

The intention was for West Beach to provide access to the beach and water-related activities, but it also offered hiking for physical activity, education about the environment from interpretive panels, open spaces for visitors to play ball and other games, picnicking, and opportunities to rest and observe nature.

The NPS offered educational interpretation at West Beach.[26] According to Indiana Dunes National Park Historical Architect Judith Collins, regular programs were held at the WBB and along the trails of West Beach shortly after it opened.[27] The *Draft Environmental Statement* for the park in 1974 said that West Beach was to be a "pioneer in educational environmental recreation with a system of trails and interpretive structures."[28] The presence of the sand dunes and the lake, along with the marsh areas at the south end of the park, offered a unique ecological environment to observe and learn about. With forty bus parking spaces along the west edge of the south lot and their proximity to the large picnic area, the expectation was that the WBHD would host school field trips. In 1977, the popular environmental education program could only accept 60 percent of the school inquiries, which translated to 201 groups of 9,336 students. These programs were run out of West Beach and the Bailly Homestead/Chellberg Farm.[29]

In addition to independent activities like swimming, sun-bathing, and picnicking, there were extensive planned events at West Beach. According to the local newspaper, the *Vidette-Messenger of Porter County*, August 1978 activities included a program about spiders, flying kites, making sand castles, making sun prints, and a photography tour.[30] The *Vidette-Messenger* regularly featured a calendar of events to update the public on the expansive programming offered at IDNL, including West Beach. These activities would not have been possible without the proposed infrastructure that came to fruition from the 1974 plan, including the expansive

[25] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 238.

[26] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 220.

[27] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 227.

[28] NPS, *Draft Environmental Statement Proposed Comprehensive Design, West Beach Unit, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana* (Prepared by Denver Service Center, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1974), 7–8, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/ien.35556030162077.

[29] Cockrell, *Signature of Time and Eternity*, 220.

[30] "August 1978 Calendar of Events," *Vidette-Messenger of Porter County* (Indiana), July 24, 1978: 24.

Parking Lot in 1976, Picnic Area Shelters in 1980, and the Picnic Area Restrooms and Visitor Contact Station in 1981. Figure 4 shows the location of the Visitor Contact Station at the immediate northwest corner of the parking lot. This close association was intentional to allow staff at the Visitor Contact Station to answer questions, feature educational displays, and promote entertainment and educational programming at West Beach and other IDNL locations. Additionally, various interpretive and educational displays were located both at the WBB and along trails.[31] The current location of the Picnic Area Shelters is where it was shown in the 1974 plan, offering a short walk from the parking lot and associated bus parking for school groups to rendezvous when visiting West Beach.

Other communities along the Indiana portion of Lake Michigan had constructed beach-related buildings to accommodate visitors, although nothing of the scale or timeframe of the WBHD. The earliest large-scale historic bathhouse is the Gary Bathhouse, now known as the Gary Bathing Beach Aquatorium (NRHP 11/25/1994). Constructed in 1921, the building was designed by Chicago architect George Maher in a blend of the Prairie and Neoclassical styles. Sited just north of Marquette Park, the precast-concrete building offered bathing suit rentals, changing rooms, showers, restrooms, and a second-level viewing area.[32] While it also provided beach-goers access to the beach on Lake Michigan, the Gary Bathhouse did not offer the amenities in regard to infrastructure, programming, or staffing as those that West Beach offered.

The Indiana Dunes Pavilion and Beach House was built at the adjacent Indiana Dunes State Park in 1928. The two-story, reinforced-concrete and brick building was the product of Indianapolis architects Bishop, Knowlton & Carson. An example of the Renaissance Revival style, the building originally had a restaurant on the first floor and restrooms, showers, and changing rooms on the second.[33] While the Indiana Dunes Pavilion and Beach House had a similar mission to the WBHD, they are of different eras and architectural styles.

Indiana Dunes State Park opened in 1925, while West Beach did not open until 1976. During that fifty-one-year gap, the state park was able to develop amenities and attract loyal visitors, many of whom were devoted to Indiana's state parks. However, within five years of opening, IDNL was able to surpass the state park's attendance figures by over 500,000 visitors. That was an astounding accomplishment and showed the impact of the federal government's efforts to open a second publicly accessible park mere miles away from the state park. While the state park's numbers dipped, they soon recovered, indicating that the people were desperate for more beaches/parks along the Lake Michigan shores in Indiana.

[31] NPS, *Final Environmental Statement Proposed Comprehensive Design, West Beach Unit, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana* (Prepared by Denver Service Center, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1975), 22.

[32] Gregory Jenkins and Carol Ann Schweikert, "Gary Bathing Beach Aquatorium, Lake County, Indiana," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1993.

[33] Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, "Indiana Dunes Pavilion and Beach House," Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Survey record #127-175-05001, 1990, State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD).

Taken together, the two sites illustrate the history of public beach-going in the Indiana dunes. While attendance figures are not available exclusively for West Beach or the state park beach, it is interesting to note park attendance figures from 1973–1983 in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Attendance numbers for Indiana Dunes State Park and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, 1973–1983.

Year	Indiana Dunes State Park attendance	Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore attendance
1973	N/A	50,300
1974	993,723	63,000
1975	1,285,240	100,500
1976	1,241,056	153,000
1977	1,118,331	264,100
1978	1,042,284	677,532
1979	1,074,595	1,606,166
1980	1,071,177	1,222,874
1981	1,114,024	1,023,436
1982	1,157,954	1,066,573
1983	1,181,113	1,510,630

Note the almost one million visitor increase at IDNL between 1978 and 1979, which coincides with the opening of West Beach.[34]

Although not a bathhouse, the Wells Street Beach pavilion just west of West Beach dates to ca. 1955 and is a concrete-block, single-story building that faces the beach and houses a restaurant and restrooms. It has a flat roof with deep overhanging eaves and decorative exposed rafter tails. It has a deep canopy on the north side supported by brick piers to shelter customers at the outdoor ordering windows.[35] The Wells Street Beach pavilion fills a gap in the beach history of Indiana's lakeshore story between the Gary Bathhouse and the Indiana Dunes Pavilion and Beach House of the 1920s, and the WBB in the mid-1970s.

[34] Data for the State Park was taken from Indiana Department of Natural Resources Annual Reports from 1974–1983 and data for the National Lakeshore was found online at NPS, "Stats Report Viewer: Indiana Dunes NP," accessed November 27, 2025, https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20(1904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=INDU.

[35] Google, "Wells Street Beach pavilion," accessed June 7, 2023, https://www.google.com/maps/place/1298+N+Wells+St,+Gary,+IN+46403/@41.6230931,-87.2263861,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x8811c09dda586527:0xefe190c624020540!8m2!3d41.6230891!4d-87.2238112?entry=ttu.

The creation of the West Beach unit greatly expanded the entertainment and recreation options along Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline. After being planned during the Mission 66 era and built during the Parkscape USA era, the West Beach unit incorporated principles of both NPS development phases. The WBHD accommodated visitors arriving in personal vehicles or buses, allowing them easy access to the lakeshore. While the WBB was not the only beach recreation facility along the shoreline, it was the largest and offered a broader range of amenities, including interpretation and public programming characteristic of the NPS.

Architecture

NPS architectural styles have evolved over the years. The earliest buildings were purely utilitarian, with some being nothing more than glorified log cabins, built from what was locally available. Between 1916 and 1942, the NPS began to build in what became known as the "Park Service Rustic" style. The NPS used natural materials specific to a park's region, designing buildings that blended in with the local environment. This style was labor intensive and would have been expensive had it not been for programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which provided massive amounts of labor during the Great Depression. When the CCC program ended in 1942, it was difficult and expensive to maintain extant Park Service Rustic resources and to construct new facilities in the same style.[36] NPS building efforts were stymied by World War II, when workers, funding, and materials were scarce. The wear and tear of these lean years was obvious to the burgeoning number of park visitors in the postwar era. The already decrepit facilities were further diminished as the number of visitors to national parks skyrocketed.

Conrad Wirth, NPS director from 1951 to 1964, addressed the situation in 1956 when he convinced President Dwight D. Eisenhower to launch Mission 66, a massive effort to improve accessibility and services within the parks by 1966 (the fiftieth anniversary of the NPS). Gone were the days of Park Service Rustic. The NPS instead promoted more modern styles and materials in an effort to "marry contemporary motifs with a timeless natural aesthetic that stayed true to the National Park Service ethos" known as "Park Service Modern."[37] Buildings became long and low and utilized economical materials and construction methods like steel, concrete, and prefabrication. In homage to Park Service Rustic, the colors, textures, and accent materials were selected to blend with the natural surroundings. The placement of buildings within the landscape was given newfound importance. Instead of the building dominating the setting, the setting was the intended focus.[38]

Building on the momentum for NPS growth and improvement started by Mission 66, Wirth's successor, George Hartzog, championed "Parkscape USA" to expand the number of NPS

[36] NPS, "Mission 66 Background and History," accessed May 22, 2024, https://home.nps.gov/articles/000/mission-66.htm.

[37] NPS, "Mission 66 and Modern Architecture." Accessed May 22, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/mission-66-modern-architecture.htm.

[38] NPS, "Mission 66 Background and History."

properties and advance interpretive services at the parks.[39] Hartzog was the NPS director while the years-long planning efforts for West Beach development were underway. The impact of both Mission 66 and Parkscape USA are tangible at the WBHD, where the influence of "modern" architecture extended well beyond 1966 and incorporated emerging new styles like Brutalism.

Originally intended as a "high density recreation area" with up to 25,000 visitors a day (10,000 in one hour at peak), West Beach had to provide for the basic needs of visitors (see Figure 7).[40] In the post-Mission 66 era, this included parking, restrooms, rest areas, food, and emergency services. It was estimated at the peak hourly attendance of 10,000 visitors, 7,000 would arrive at the park by car to take advantage of the beach, nature, recreation, and educational opportunities, with the remainder traveling by bus, rapid transit, bike, or walking. Even after the plans for West Beach were scaled down to 15,000 visitors a day (5,500 in one hour at peak), it was still estimated that 3,850 people would arrive at the park by car.[41] The parking issue had to be addressed at all the newly created national seashores and lakeshores. It was necessary to strike a balance among three seemingly conflicting issues: opening what was becoming exceedingly rare public beach access, accommodating unprecedented visitor and parking demands, and protecting the delicate environment of the dunes. The solution from Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff came in the form of an 850-car/40-bus parking lot, although only the northern two portions were ultimately constructed (see Figure 1).

Vehicular access was just the beginning. Even with lowering the density of West Beach, planning for expansive numbers of visitors was essential. NPS numbers show 17 million people visited the national parks in 1940; that number grew to 56 million in 1956.[42] By the official end of Mission 66 in 1966, there were 133.1 million annual visitors, which subsequently exploded to 211.6 million in 1972.[43] Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff called for the construction of the WBB, Parking Lot, Visitor Contact Station, and Picnic Area in the 1973 plan with the higher projected visitor numbers, and those elements remained consistent even after the visitation projections were lowered. The initial focus was the WBB. Based on the NPS experience of opening IDNL before the construction of restrooms in 1969, there was no question that the WBB would need to be open and available when the largest beach within IDNL opened in 1976. Staff knew that without the bare minimum offerings of restrooms, rest areas, concessions, and emergency services, hours-long visits to the beach would not be possible, particularly for families

Brutalism was not a common architectural style of the time. Because of its starkness, it was off-putting and generally perceived as ugly. However, one of the biggest proponents of the style on a nationwide scale was the General Services Administration (GSA). The GSA is the federal agency responsible for the construction and management of federal buildings. Between 1960 and

[39] NPS, "Mission 66 Background and History."

[40] NPS, *Final Environmental Statement*, 1.

[41] NPS, *Final Environmental Statement*, 1.

[42] NPS, "Mission 66: Birth of the Modern National Park."

[43] NPS, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History*.

1976, the GSA expanded its holdings by completing over 700 building projects.[44] With a focus on modernism, the GSA and other government agencies at all levels liked the permanence and monumentality conveyed by the large, angular forms of Brutalism, as well as the economy provided by using an inexpensive material like concrete with few decorative elements.[45] A wide variety of public buildings were constructed in the Brutalist style during the 1960s and 1970s, including office buildings, courthouses, schools, libraries, and public housing.

Brutalism was first identified as an architectural style in England in the 1950s, with the construction of Alison and Peter Smithson's Hunstanton School and Sugden House. Although initially dubbed "New Brutalism" by architectural historian Reyner Banham in 1955, the term "Brutalism" evolved as a reference to the unfinished concrete that was the hallmark of the style—known in French as *beton-brut*.[46] Popular in public buildings between the 1950s–1980s, it was distinguished by "visually heavy edifices with geometric lines, solid concrete forms, exaggerated slabs, double-height ceilings, massive forbidding walls, exposed concrete, and a predominantly monochromatic palette."[47]

The WBB, Visitor Contact Station, and Picnic Area Restrooms highlight the Brutalist style, with the WBB being the clearest and best example in the district. Although not exclusively concrete as is typical of Brutalism, the overall heaviness is conveyed effectively with the solid, expansive brick and concrete. The brick is the primary wall material, but the concrete literally and figuratively links the building to the ground and helps the dominating building blend into the landscape. The geometric elements and concrete features—the slab, piers, beltcourses, and shed-roofed projections—are what exemplify the building as Brutalist. The concrete illustrates the structural elements of the building while also providing a sculptural component and establishing a sense of minimalism. While it is a single-story building, the form of the roof projections visually conveys a second level, and their existence allows for a light source outside of breaking the solidity of the masonry.

The site chosen for the WBB has both practical and theoretical rationales. The bathhouse needed to be close to the beach and located in an area that offered some protection from the harsh environment, while also not damaging the delicate ecosystem surrounding it. Given the influence of setting and materials within the Parkscape USA program, nestling this brick and concrete building into a void between sand dunes, where it is not visible to visitors until they slip past a large dune and turn a corner, fits with the philosophy of the setting being the focus. Yet the physicality of the building makes it appear to be almost floating on a sand dune, while the heaviness of the structure and the roof projections seem to visually keep it grounded.

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[44] General Services Administration, "Mission and Background," accessed June 6, 2023, https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/mission-and-background/our-missions-evolution.

[45] Dana Marks, "Why are there so many Brutalist federal buildings in Washington?," *National Capital Planning Commission*, 2018, https://www.ncpc.gov/news/item/52/.

[46] Tate Modern Gallery, "Brutalism," accessed December 23, 2022, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/b/brutalism.

[47] Architecture & Design, "Brutalist Architecture-A Retrospective," accessed November 16, 2024, https://www.architectureanddesign.com.au/features/list/a-look-at-brutalist-architecture.

In 1977, the design for the WBB won the Prestressed Concrete Institute Award for "achievements in esthetic expression, function, and economy using precast and prestressed concrete."[48]

The design of the Visitor Contact Station is much less obviously Brutalist but clearly intended to mimic the WBB, particularly in the geometric form of the structure and the angled roofline. The Picnic Area Restrooms even vaguely allude to Brutalism with their form and roof.

While Brutalism was not utilized locally, there are several modernist buildings along the lakeshore that influenced the use of non-traditional architecture to contribute to the beach aesthetic and served as a catalyst for the use of a more modern style for the WBB.

The most notable cluster of early modernist buildings along Indiana's segment of Lake Michigan is within the Century of Progress Architectural District (NRHP listed 06/30/1986). This collection of five houses from the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago is within the national park.[49] In 1935, a collection of houses was moved (mostly by barge) from Chicago to Beverly Shores, Indiana, a then up-and-coming resort community, to serve as the centerpiece of a real estate development by Robert Bartlett. Originally intended to highlight technological and material advancements at the World's Fair in Chicago, the houses were built in a variety of forms and styles to show what the house of the future would look like.[50] The unique architecture, influenced by the Art Deco and International styles, relied heavily on bold forms combined with large expanses of windows to take in the scenery. These features carried over almost fifty years later to influence the style of the buildings at West Beach.

Other modernist houses in or near the national park include the Solomon Enclave, a grouping of three International style residences within the national park, built in 1948 by prominent Chicago architect Louis Solomon (NRHP listed 04/27/2011).[51] The 1952 Read Dunes House, also located in the park, was owned by Philo and Irene Read, avid proponents of IDNL who envisioned the Prairie-esque modern design blending in well with the surrounding landscape. (NRHP listed 12/08/2011)[52] The Dr. John and Gerda Meyer House, another International style residence in the park, was built into the ridge of a sand dune in 1961 (NRHP listed 01/14/2013).[53] Although outside the park, the Imre and Maria Horner House, built in 1949 in the International style, was designed by Chicago architect Otto Kolb to rest between the sand dunes (NRHP listed

[48] "Nine Structures Cited For Use of Concrete," *American Institute of Architects Journal*, November 1977, 7, https://usmodernist.org/AJ/AJ-1977-11.pdf.

[49] Fay Hendry, Keith J. Everett, Thomas Hensley, and Thomas Kuck, "Century of Progress Architectural District, Porter County, Indiana," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1986.

[50] NPS, "1933 Chicago World's Fair Century of Progress Homes," accessed February 6, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/indu/learn/historyculture/centuryofprogress.htm.

[51] Kurt West Garner, "Solomon Enclave, Porter County, Indiana," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2011.

[52] Pia Lopez, "Read Dunes House, Porter County, Indiana," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2011.

[53] Kurt West Garner, "Dr. John & Gerda Meyer House, Porter County, Indiana," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2013.

09/25/1996).[54] These buildings helped establish modern styles as the hallmark of the beach aesthetic and illustrated how such buildings could be incorporated into the dunes landscape.

A final architect who influenced the use of modern architecture along Indiana's lakeshore was John Lloyd Wright. Son of famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the younger Wright became a resident of nearby Long Beach, Indiana, in 1923. He went on to design a number of buildings in the Indiana dunes region, including several houses and the town hall for the town of Long Beach. As his career progressed, Wright moved away from his father's trademark Prairie style and found his own personal architectural style, an interpretation of the International style.[55] A Multiple Property Document Form, J*ohn Lloyd Wright in Northwest Indiana,* was listed in the NRHP on 08/01/2013, along with four houses Wright designed (Burnham, Jaworoski, Jackson, and Hoover-Timm

Conclusion

While the WBHD was not the first or only beach and recreational facility along the Indiana shore of Lake Michigan, it is unique in its architectural style and how it fit into the NPS plan to preserve segments of the country's seashores and lakeshores for public use. Much of the design of West Beach remains intact today, including the buildings, associated circulation features, spatial organization, land use, and vegetation. The WBHD possesses local significance under Criterion A for entertainment/recreation and Criterion C for architecture to merit listing in the NRHP, despite the district being on the cusp of the fifty-year threshold.

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[54] Camille Fife and Thomas Salmon, "Imre & Maria Horner House, Porter County, Indiana," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1996.

[55] Kurt West Garner, "John Lloyd Wright in Northwest Indiana," Multiple Property Document Form for the National Register of Historic Places, 2013.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
__X__ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _Indiana Dunes National Park_____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ___N/A_____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

59.3 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

1. 16 482845 4608329
2. 16 482650 4607609
3. 16 482462 4607588
4. 16 482462 4607670
5. 16 482348 4607669
6. 16 482349 4607786
7. 16 482463 4607786
8. 16 482466 4608260

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Starting at a point 10' south and 10' west of the southwest corner of the West Beach parking lot, proceed north for 269', and turn west. Proceed west for 374' and turn north. Proceed north for 385' and turn east. Proceed east for 375' and turn north. Proceed north for 1,556' to a point between the duneland vegetation and the Lake Michigan shoreline and turn east. Proceed east for 1,264' along the beach and turn south. Proceed south/southwest for 2,592', staying roughly parallel to the curve of West Beach Road from the bathhouse to 10' south of the southeast corner of the West Beach parking lot and turn west. Proceed west for 618' to the point of origin.

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11. Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the built-environment resources within West Beach that were constructed to accommodate the opening of the West Beach unit of the then Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. These resources are the West Beach Bathhouse, Visitor Contact Station, 600-car/40-bus Parking Lot, Picnic Area Shelters, and Picnic Area Restrooms, which constitute the central visitor infrastructure included in the 1974 plan completed by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff for the NPS and were integral to the development and planned use of the beach area for recreation. It includes approximately 0.3 miles of beach that is closest to the bathhouse and therefore represents the accessibility anticipated by the implementation of the 1974 plan.

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12. Form Prepared By

name/title: Amy Borland, Cooper Shields, Wes Cunningham

organization: Gray & Pape, Inc.

street & number: 8902 Otis Ave, Suite 220A

city or town: Indianapolis state: Indiana zip code:46216

e-mail: aborland@graypape.com

telephone: 317-756-1672

date: 12/06/2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items**: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

West Beach Historic District, Portage, Porter County, Indiana

Photos taken by Cooper Shields on August 23, 2022, include photos 11–16, 18–19, 21, 24–25, and 27–29.

Photos taken by Amy Borland on August 4, 2023, include photos 17, 20, 26, and 30–31.

Photos taken by Amy Borland on May 9, 2024, include photos 1–10, 22–23, and 32–40.

Photo CD with Indiana Dunes National Park

Photo 1: Camera facing west; view from east boundary along north boundary on beach.

Photo 2: Camera facing east; view from west boundary along north boundary on beach.

Photo 3: Camera facing northeast; view of dunes and Lake Michigan.

Photo 4: Camera facing south; view of dunes and forest.

Photo 5: Camera facing south; view of dunes south of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 6: Camera facing northeast; view of dune succession trail.

Photo 7: Camera facing northeast; view of dunes.

Photo 8: Camera facing north; view of paved path to West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 9: Camera facing northeast; view of dunes and trailhead for dune succession trail to left and West Beach trail at right.

Photo 10: Camera facing west; view of Long Lake trail.

Photo 11: Camera facing north; view of south façade of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 12: Camera facing northwest; view of south entry and walkway of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 13: Camera facing north; view of southwest corner of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 14: Camera facing southwest; view of wood stairs to the beach of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 15: Camera facing south; view of north façade and walkway of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 16: Camera facing southeast; view of northeast corner and north entry of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 17: Camera facing northwest; view of southeast corner of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 18: Camera facing north; view of east picnic/rest area of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 19: Camera facing northwest; view of pier with scupper of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 20: Camera facing northeast; view of underside and storage/utility area under West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 21: Camera facing north; view out of north entry of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 22: Camera facing west; view of interior corridor of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 23: Camera facing southwest; view of interior corridor and light-well of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 24: Camera facing east; view of interior of east picnic/rest area of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 25: Camera facing east; view of interior corridor, concession stand, entry to women's restrooms, showers, and changing room, and east picnic/rest area of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 26: Camera facing south; view of doorway to men's restroom, showers, and changing room from corridor of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 27: Camera facing southeast; view of outer room of men's changing room of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 28: Camera facing east; view of men's restroom of West Beach Bathhouse.

Photo 29: Camera facing west; view of men's showers of West Beach Bathhouse.
Photo 30: Camera facing east; view in lifeguard area of West Beach Bathhouse.
Photo 31: Camera facing west; view of concession kitchen of West Beach Bathhouse.
Photo 32: Camera facing south; view of northernmost parking lot.

Photo 33: Camera facing northwest; view of parking lot and Visitor Contact Station in distance.

Photo 34: Camera facing northeast; view of parking lot and Visitor Contact Station at center.

Photo 35: Camera facing northwest; view of Picnic Area Shelters and Picnic Area Restrooms.

Photo 36: Camera facing north; view of Picnic Area Shelters and Picnic Area Restrooms.

Photo 37: Camera facing west; view of Picnic Area Shelter.

Photo 38: Camera facing northwest; view of Picnic Area Restrooms.

Photo 39: Camera facing southeast; view of parking lot.

Photo 40: Camera facing northwest; view of Visitor Contact Station.

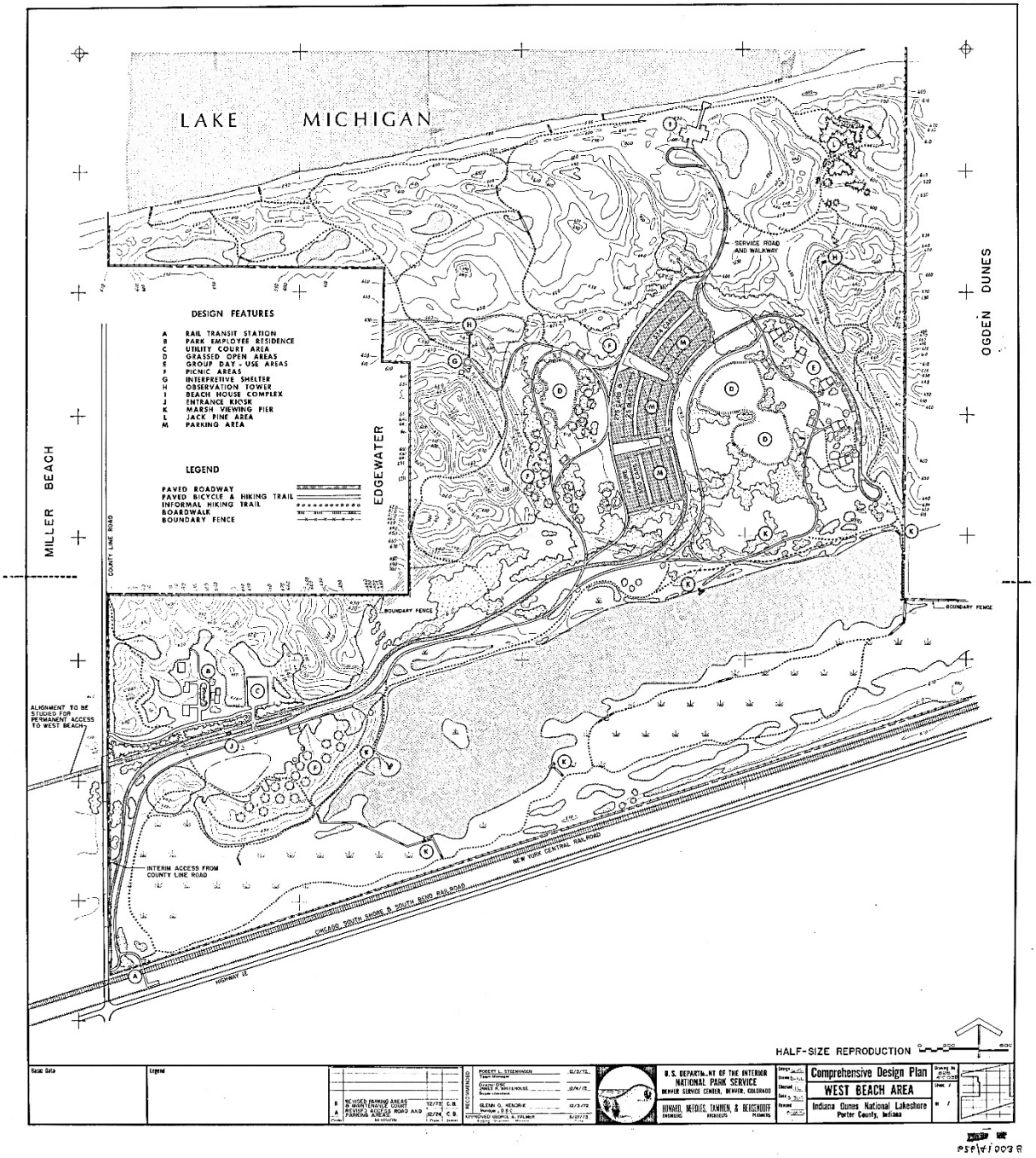


Figure 1: 1974 Comprehensive Design Plan created by Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff.

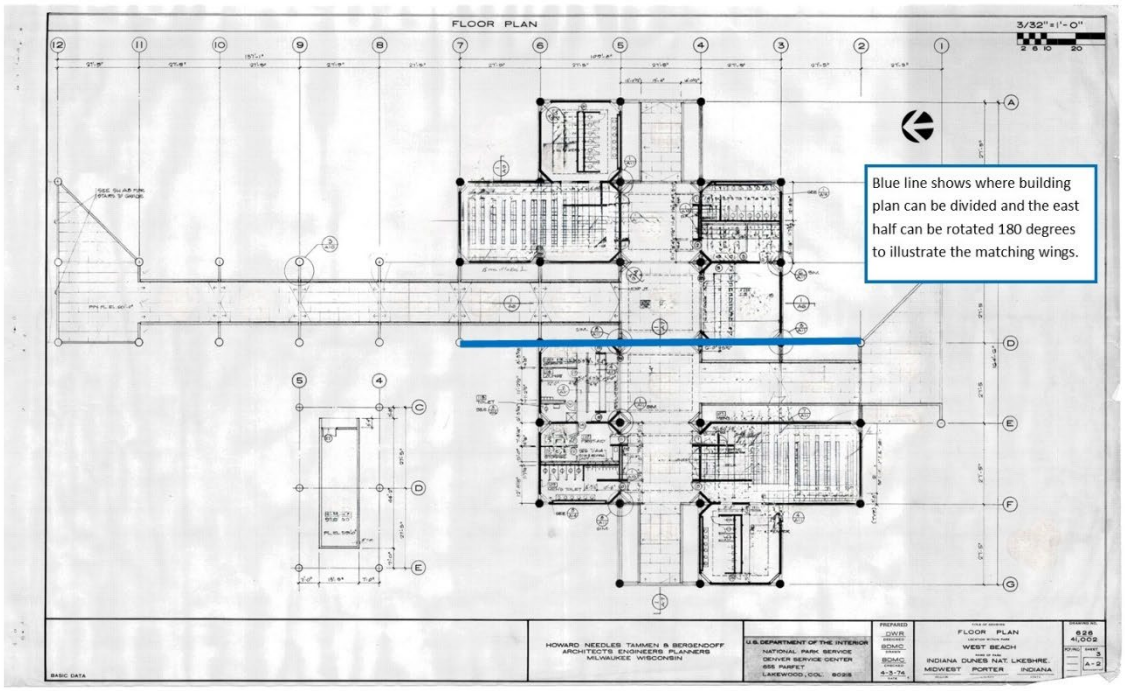


Figure 2: Floorplan of West Beach Bathhouse with blue line showing where plan could be divided and rotated to illustrate symmetrical plan.

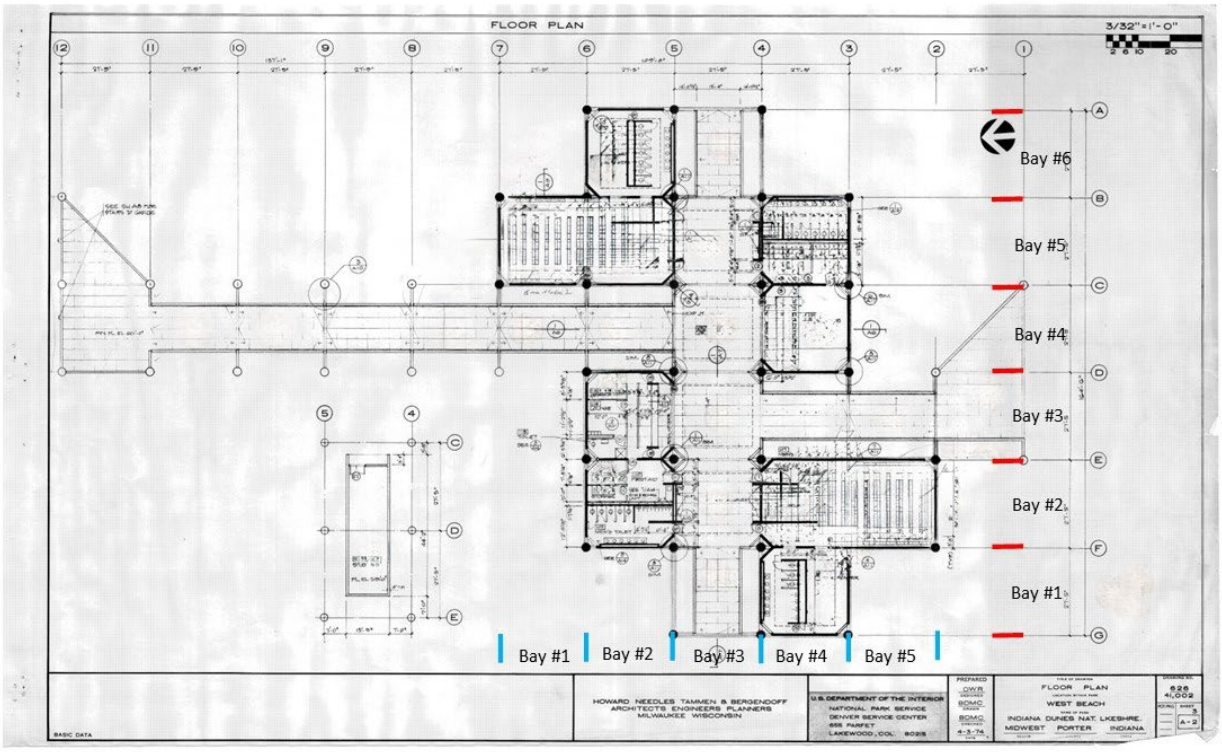


Figure 3: Plan of the West Beach Bathhouse illustrating how the exterior bays are numbered from left to right in the Description.

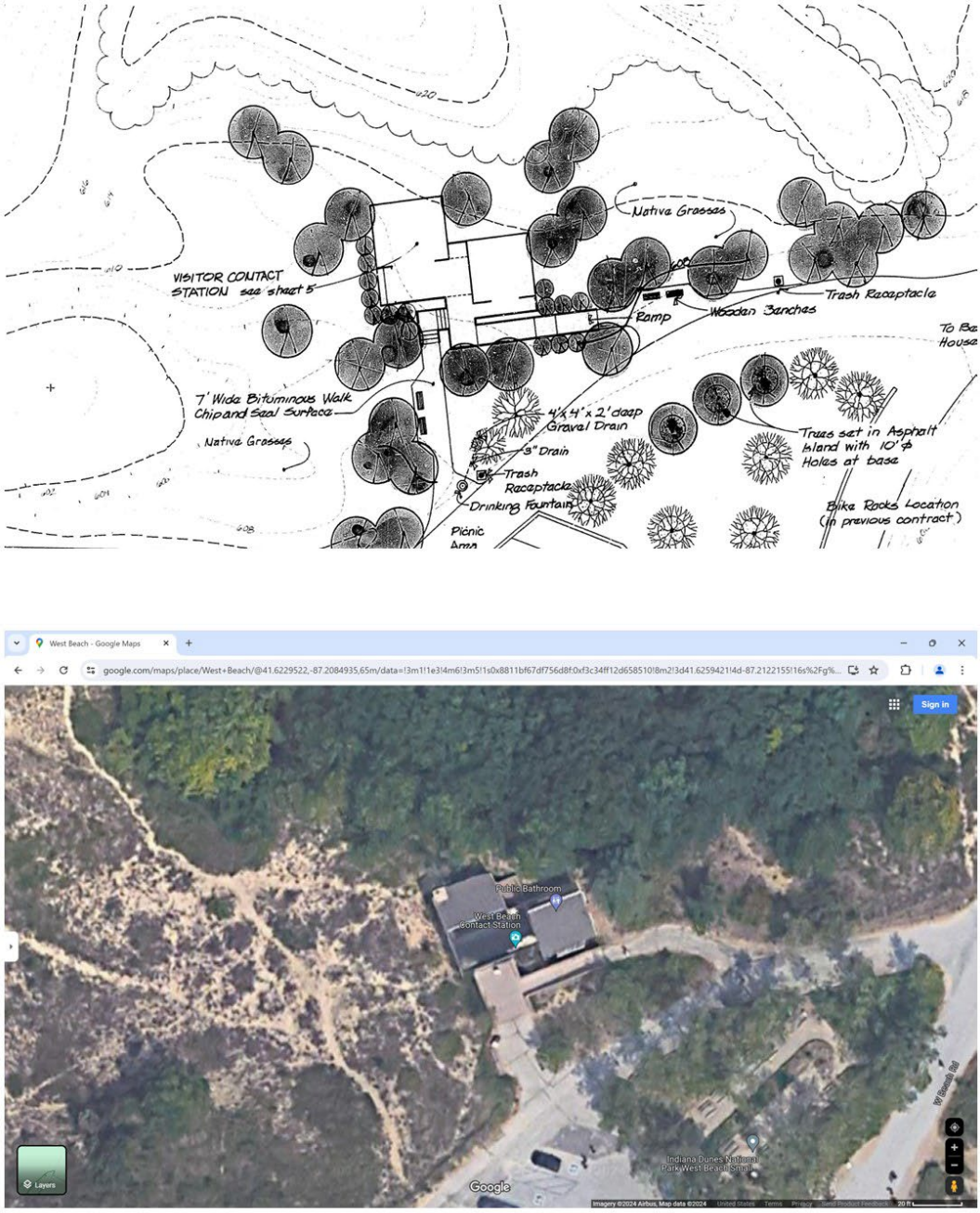


Figure 4: Visitors Contact Station: Plan from 1977 (top) and 2024 Google view (bottom).

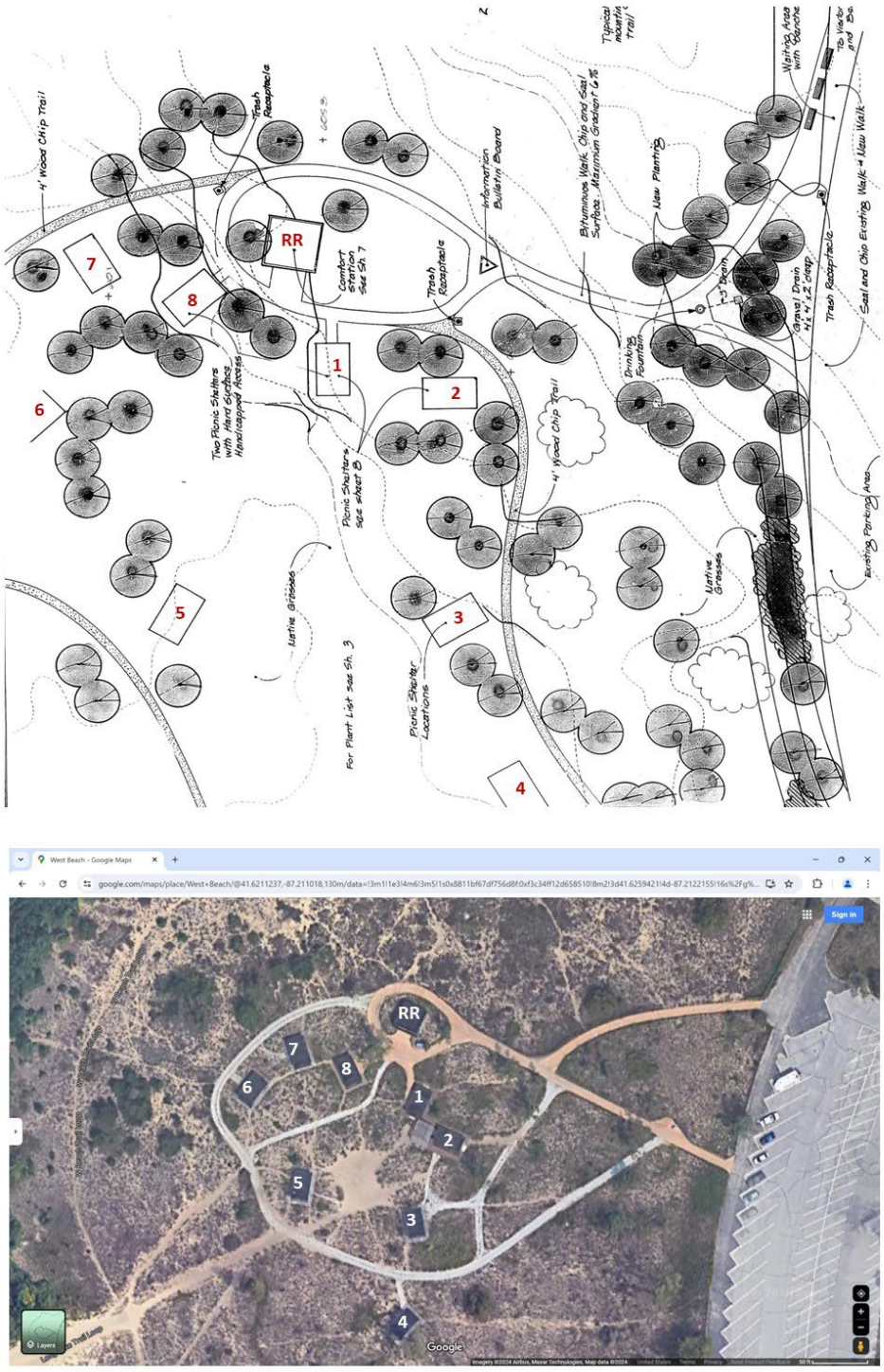


Figure 5: Picnic Area Shelters and Restrooms: Plan from 1977 (top) and Google view (bottom).



Figure 6: 2024 Trail Map for West Beach at Indiana Dunes National Park (NPS).

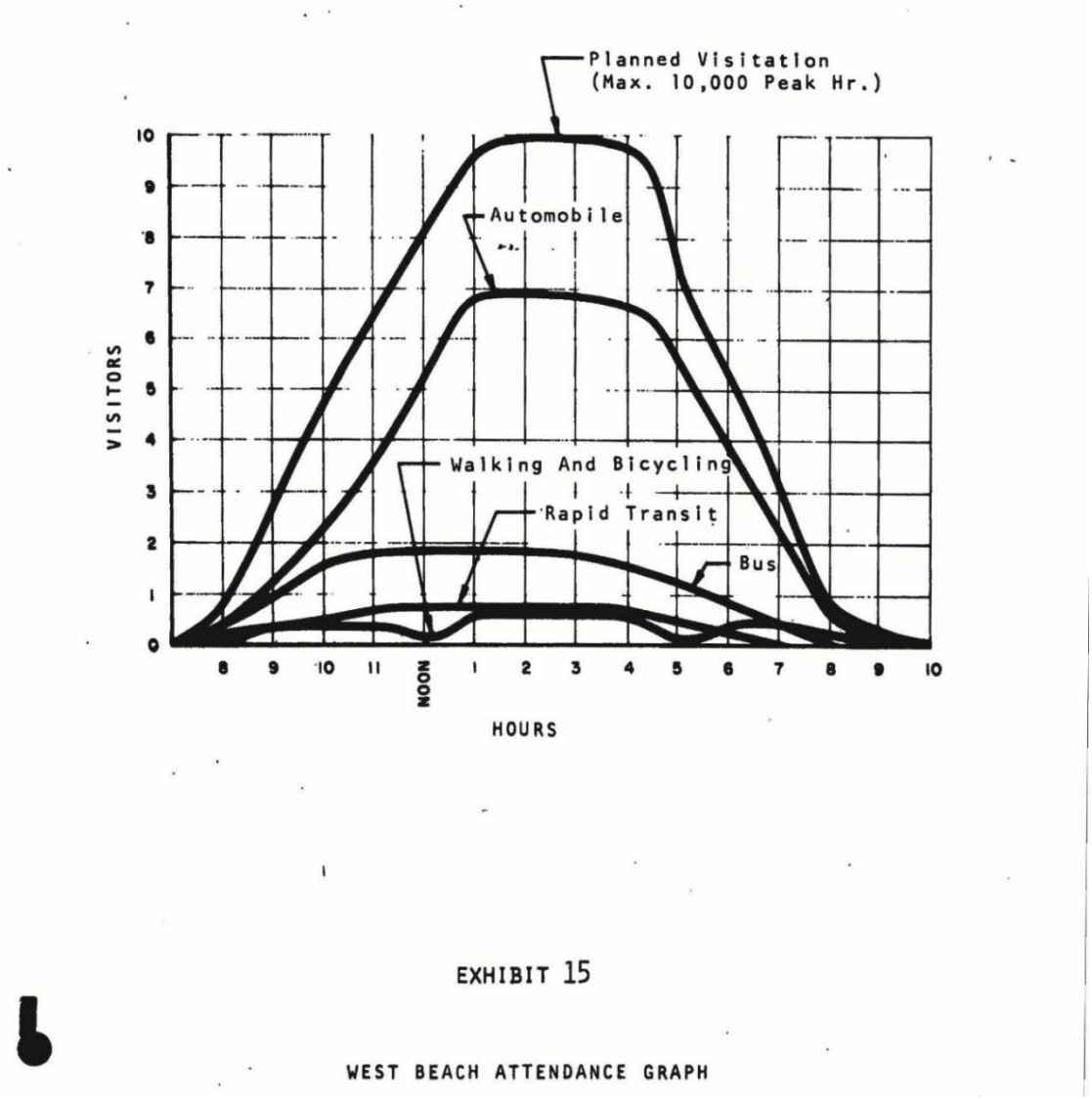


Figure 7: Graph from NPS, *Final Environmental Statement for Indiana Dunes West Beach Unit* (1975) showing the projected number of visitors by hour and by mode of transportation.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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West Beach Historic District
National Register of Historic Places nomination
376 North County Line Road
Portage vicinity, Porter County, Indiana
Map # 1: Indiana Dunes National Park boundary &
West Beach Historic District location

GRAY & PAPE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT



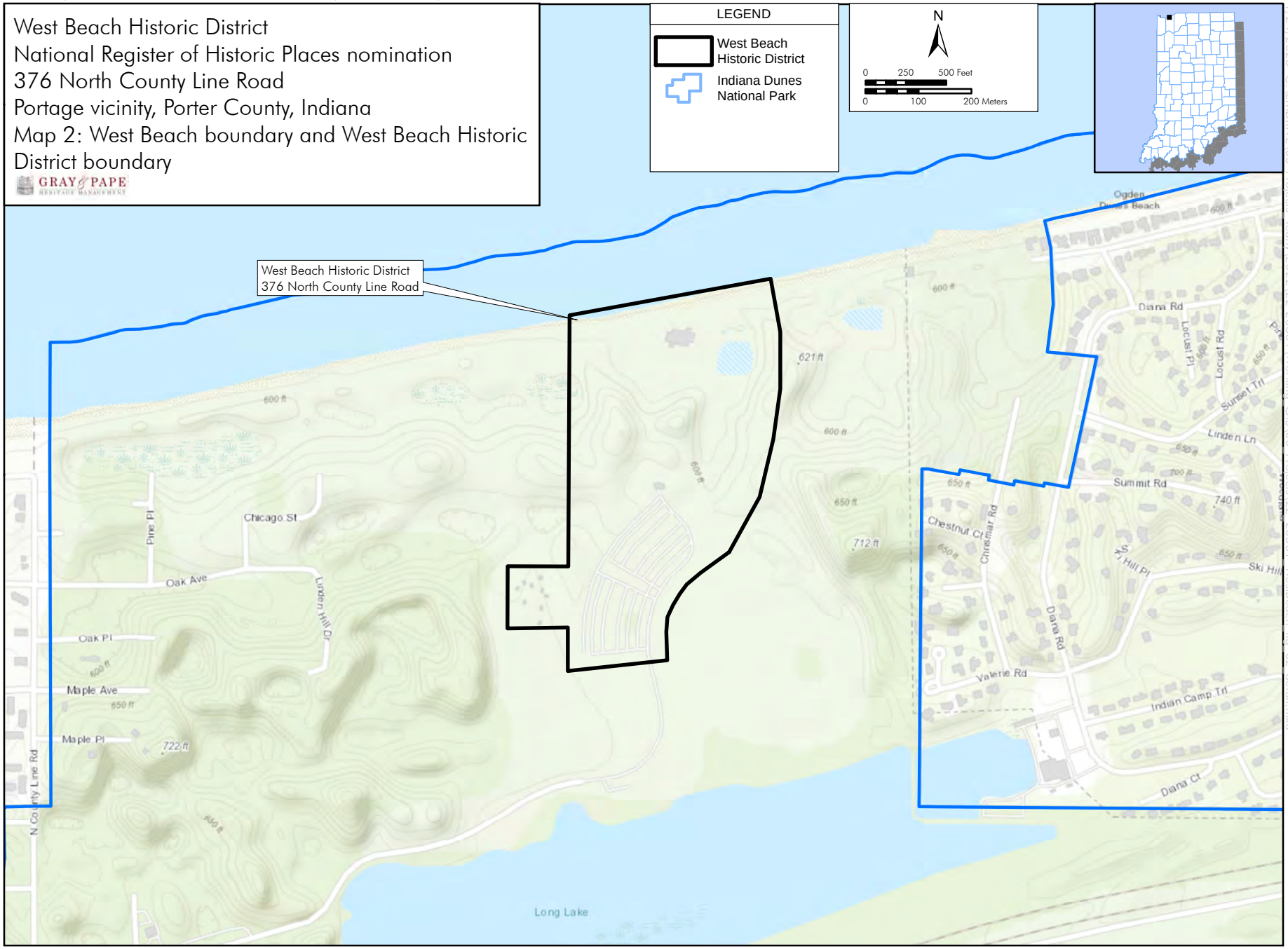
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Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN,

West Beach Historic District
National Register of Historic Places nomination
376 North County Line Road
Portage vicinity, Porter County, Indiana
Map 2: West Beach boundary and West Beach Historic District boundary

GRAY & PAPE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT



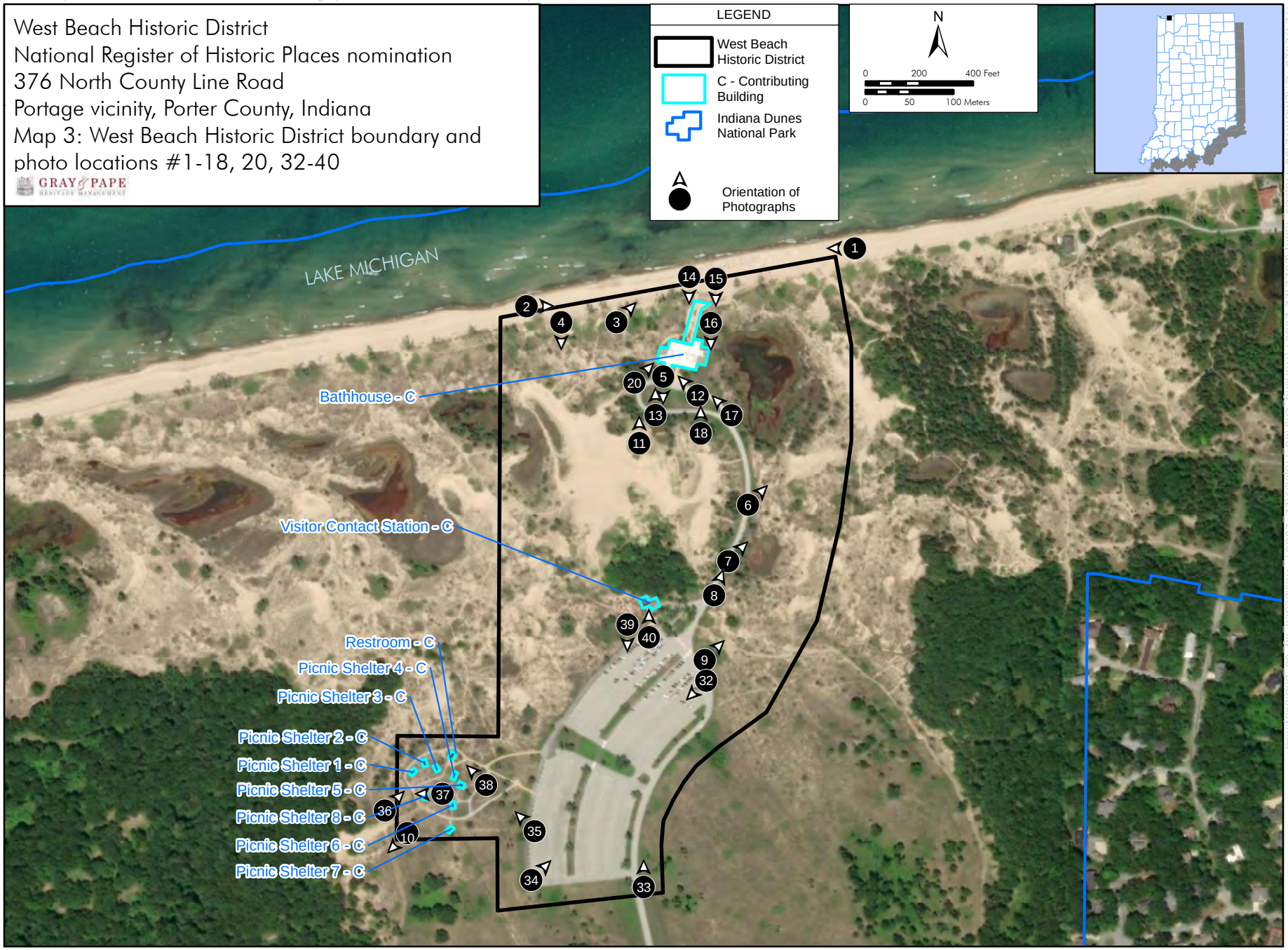
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Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

West Beach Historic District
National Register of Historic Places nomination
376 North County Line Road
Portage vicinity, Porter County, Indiana
Map 3: West Beach Historic District boundary and photo locations #1-18, 20, 32-40

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Created in ArcGIS 10.8.1 for G&P Project 22-20501

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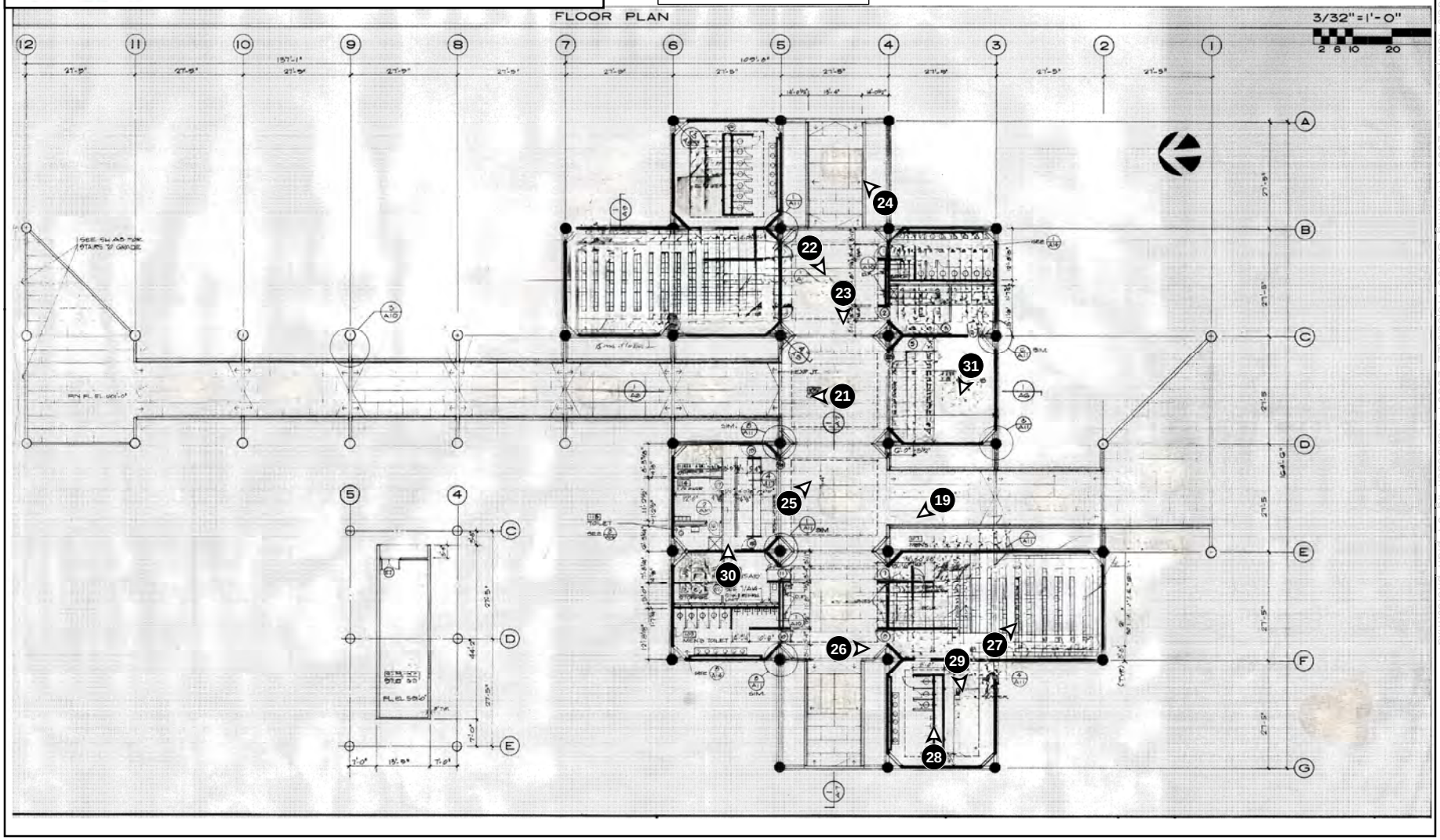
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West Beach Historic District
National Register of Historic Places nomination
376 North County Line Road
Portage vicinity, Porter County, Indiana
Map #4: West Beach Historic District bathhouse plans and photo locations #19, 21-31

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HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

LEGEND

Orientation of Photographs



CONTAINS PRIVILEGED INFORMATION - DO NOT RELEASE

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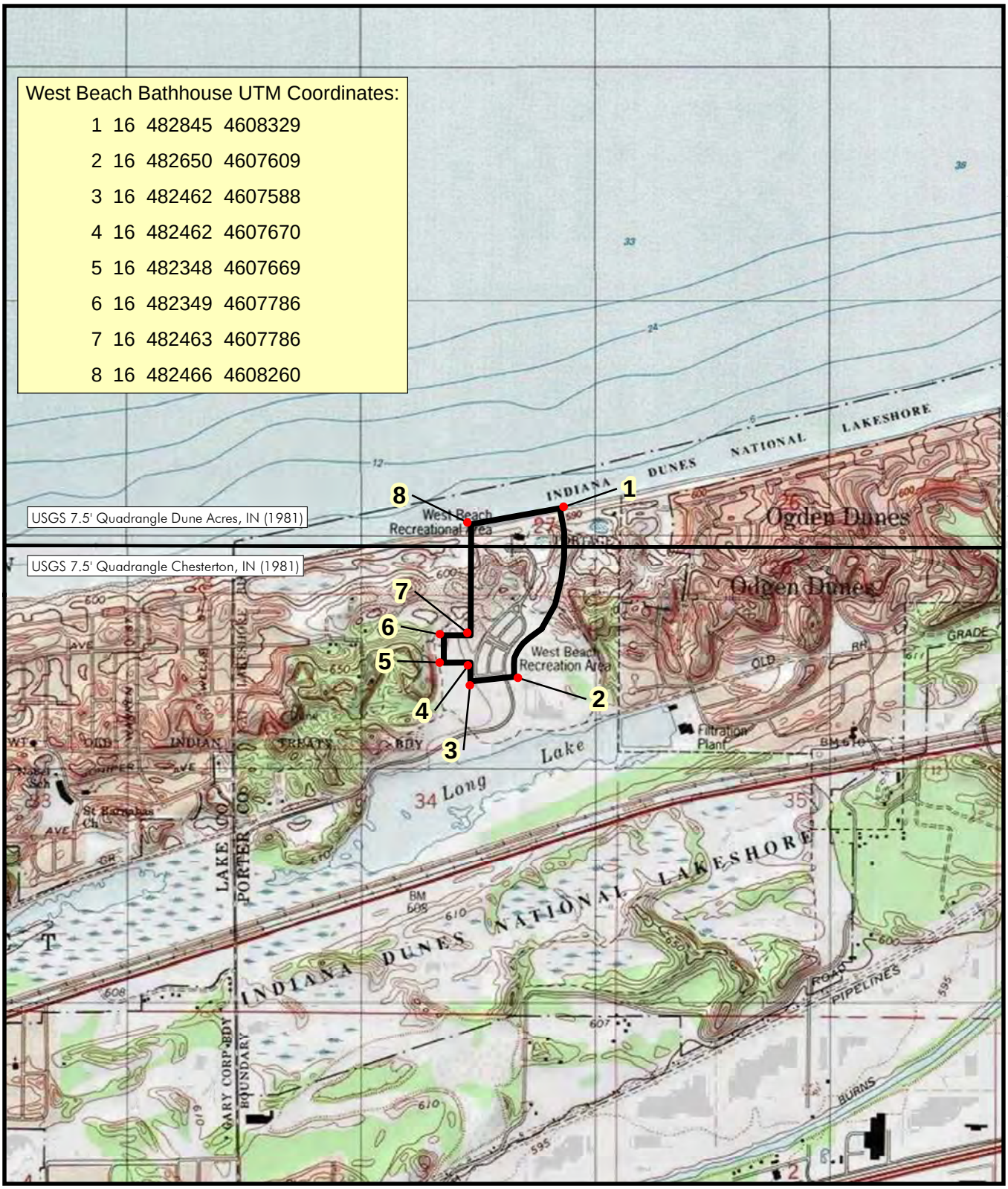
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West Beach Bathhouse UTM Coordinates:

1	16	482845	4608329
2	16	482650	4607609
3	16	482462	4607588
4	16	482462	4607670
5	16	482348	4607669
6	16	482349	4607786
7	16	482463	4607786
8	16	482466	4608260

USGS 7.5' Quadrangle Dune Acres, IN (1981)

USGS 7.5' Quadrangle Chesterton, IN (1981)



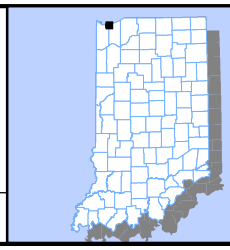
N

0 500 1,000 Feet

0 250 500 Meters

West Beach Historic District

1 Mile



GRAY & PAPE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

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OFFICIAL VEHICLES ONLY
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SHOWERS






Koala Bear Kare






















Regulations
West Beach Hours - 6am to 9pm
All pets must be on a leash
Stay off marram grass
Hike designated trail only
No glass
No fires
Grill in designated picnic areas only
No fireworks

