

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop, Chairman
Mark-Up Memorandum

September 29, 2017

To: All Committee on Natural Resources Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x 6-7736)

Mark-up: **H.R. 1488 (Rep. Peter J. Visclosky)**, To retitle Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park, and for other purposes.
October 3 & 4, 2017; 1334 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 1488 (Rep. Peter J. Visclosky), “*The Indiana Dunes National Park Act.*”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 1488, introduced by Representative Peter Visclosky (D-IN-1), redesignates the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park. Under this legislation, management would not change significantly as it is already a unit of the National Park System.

Cosponsors

[9 cosponsors](#)

Background

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was established by Congress in 1966 through Public Law 89–761. The designation of the national lakeshore as a unit of the National Park System was the culmination of decades of work by conservationists, area residents, and elected officials. The 1966 Act included 8,330 acres of land and water. The National Park Service and conservation advocates continued to seek expansion of the boundaries, and four subsequent expansion bills (1976, 1980, 1986, and 1992) increased the size of the national lakeshore to more than 15,000 acres.¹

Proponents of redesignating the national lakeshore as a national park note that Stephen Mather, the first Director of the National Park Service, originally had plans to create a “Sand Dunes National Park.” In October of 1916, shortly after the National Park Service was established, Director Mather held hearings in Chicago to gauge public sentiment on a “Sand Dunes National Park.” In a Department of the Interior report published after the hearings, Director Mather stated, “No national park or other Federal reservation offers this phenomenon

¹ National Park Service, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore “History & Culture.”
<https://www.nps.gov/indu/learn/historyculture/index.htm>

for the pleasure and edification of the people, and no national park is as accessible. Furthermore, the dunes offer to the visitor extraordinary scenery, a large variety of plant life, magnificent bathing beaches, and splendid opportunities to camp and live in the wild country close to nature.”² Despite Director Mather’s support, the national park proposal was abandoned at the onset of World War I. Several years later, in 1925, Indiana Dunes State Park was established.

Redesignation of the national lakeshore as a national park would make Indiana Dunes the 60th national park in the United States. Although there is no statutory definition of a national park, they are typically considered the “crown jewels” of the park system. National Parks are generally large, diverse areas with outstanding natural features and ecological resources. Proponents argue that national park status gives greater recognition to the dunes and will potentially draw more visitors and boost the local economy.

Major Provisions

Section 1. Short Title.

Section 2. Findings.

Section 3. Redesignates Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

The Administration position is unknown at this time.

Anticipated Amendments

Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT-01) will offer an amendment striking the findings section and making a minor technical correction.

[Effect on Current Law \(Ramseyer\)](#)

² Stephen T. Mather, “Report on the Proposed Sand Dunes National Park Indiana.” 1917.
<http://npshistory.com/publications/sand-dunes-np.pdf>