UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO. 0-32
SAND DUNES OF MICHIGAN
PART I

PROPOSED NATIONAL PARKS
SANDS DUNES
MICHIGAN

IMPORTANT
This file constitutes a part of the official records of the National Park Service and should not be separated or papers withdrawn without express authority of the official in charge. Officials and employees will be held responsible for failure to observe these rules, which are necessary to protect the integrity of the official records.

ARNO B. CAMMERER,
Director.
PROPOSED SAND DUNES NATL. PARK, MICHIGAN.

REVIEW:

This area is located in Berrien County bordering Lake Michigan.

By letter of Dec. 3, 1930, Mr. Cammerer wrote to the Hon. J. C. Ketcham stating that an investigation was made and that this area should be made into a state park as it contained the same general landscape as the state park in Porter County, Indiana, and is only a short distance from that park.

Mr. Mather investigated this area in 1917 and it was decided to make a state park project out of it rather than a national park.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that this area be dropped from our list of proposed parks.

C. L. Wirth

G. L. WIRTH.

APPROVED: JAN 23 1933

[Signature]

Director.
SLAUTTERBACK MOTOR CO.
221 W. Main Street,
Benton Harbor, Michigan.

November 24, 1930.

Hon. John C. Ketcham,
U. S. Congressman
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

The Civic Committee of the Benton Harbor Chamber of Commerce have been discussing the possibility of a development of either all or a portion of the Dunes land along the shore of Lake Michigan from a point three or four miles north of Bridgman, south of Sawyer. There is something like four thousand acres of most interesting country, and, since the Federal government has very few parks in this part of United States, we are wondering if it would be possible to interest the proper authorities in such a project in Berrien county.

Will you kindly give me your advice on such a thing, and, if you see fit, advise what steps should be taken to get it across.

Yours very truly,

Ralph W. Slautterback.
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

November 28, 1930.

Director of Park Service,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Complying with your request over the telephone this morning I am herewith transmitting letter received from Mr. Ralph W. Slatterback relative to the possible development of a Federal Park in Berrien County, Michigan.

Yours very truly,

[Signature]

JCK'G
Brooks;

If you look at pc about 5 or 7 years back you will find that Director Mather investigated the Dunes proposition, and it was decided to make a state park project out of it, at least that portion near Michigan City, Ind. It is now an Indiana State Park.
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON DECEMBER 3 1933

Hon. John C. Ketcham,
House of Representatives.

My dear Mr. Ketcham:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 28, 1930, inclosing a letter to you from Mr. Ralph W. Slatterback dated November 24, 1930, relative to establishing a national park including the Dunes land along the shore of Lake Michigan, in Berrien County, Michigan.

Senate Resolution adopted September 7, 1916, imposed upon the Department of the Interior the duty of investigating and reporting to Congress "the advisability of securing, by purchase or otherwise, all that portion of the Counties of Lake, Laporte, and Porter, in the State of Indiana, bordering upon Lake Michigan, and commonly known as the 'Sand dunes', with a view that such lands be created a national park." Following this resolution an investigation was made and hearings held looking toward the advisability of creating a national park in this area. It was considered better, however, that instead of creating a national park this area should be made a State park which has been done. The State park contains 2,200 acres in Porter County, Indiana, which is only a short distance from the area suggested by Mr. Slatterback.

Since there is now a State Park containing the same general landscape as the one suggested it would not be the policy of this Service to establish a national park of this character. I see no reason however why the matter could not be taken up with the State of Michigan and have the State authorities consider the project proposed by Mr. Slatterback.

I am returning herewith Mr. Slatterback's letter together with carbon copy of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) ARNO B. CAMMER

ARNO B. CAMMER,
Acting Director.

Inclosure No. 7560
HJB-bib
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STATE PARK DIVISION
905 Bauch Bldg.
Lansing, Michigan

June 25, 1935

Fifth Regional Office
State Park E.C.W.
812 Illinois Bldg.
Indianapolis, Indiana

Subject: Report on Warren
Dunes State Park

Sirs:

Enclosed you will find in triplicate a report of my investigation of Warren Dunes State Park, Berrien County, Michigan. This report describes the park and includes my opinions on the desirability of making it a National Park.

Very truly yours,

Sterling Myrick
Inspector, Fifth Region
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BRANCH OF PLANNING
EXTENSION DIVISION

PROPOSED NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS

(Form of report from Regional Officers)
To be typed throughout.

Letter of transmittal: To be attached (summary and recommendation)
Name of Project: Warren Dunes State Park
Location - (state, county, distance and direction from known city)
   Michigan, Berrien County, 80 miles from Chicago, Ill.
Area - Total 252.8 Acres  _______ Square Miles.

Boundaries - (description, reference to maps to be attached)
   Proposed: Existing: See map attached herewith

Recommended:

Accessibility:
   Railway:
   Highway: U.S. HIGHWAY #12
   Airline: Lake Michigan
   Waterway:

Major characteristics - (Indicate those which are outstanding and
   attach additional information if necessary)

1. Scenic features - (topography, elevation, plant cover,
   Lake Michigan shore water, etc):
   Fine Beach
   High moving dune
   High wooded dune

2. Historical or prehistoric features:
   Negligible

3. Geological features:
   Typical sand dune formations
4. Recreational possibilities (if compatible with project)

National:
Used by tourists on route U.S. #12.

Local:
Used by native and summer residents.

Estimated population within a radius of 50 miles:

- 100 " 5,000,000
- 200 " 12,000,000

5. Biological features:

Vegetative:
Characteristic dune ecology, very interesting.

Wildlife:
Fauna characteristic of Michigan dune country.

Need for conservation:

Frontage on Lake Michigan is rapidly being sub-divided and sold for private cottage sites.
Relative importance in comparison with areas of similar nature elsewhere:
It is a fine area of its kind, but its limited extent makes it relatively unimportant compared with existing Indiana Dunes State Park (2500A) and Van Buren Recreational Area (4000A) in Van Buren County, Michigan, now under consideration.

Possible development -
Recreational facilities (if compatible with project):
Bathing beach and picnic possibilities.
(No development now exists.)

Utilities -
Water supply:
None
Parked space, capacity:
100 cars (unimproved)
Campground sites, capacity:
None developed
Light and power facilities:
None (Lines within two miles of area)
Sewerage disposal facilities:
None

Capacity for handling of visitors:
Limited by size of natural auto parking area (100 cars)

Practicability of administration and protection:
Practical to protect and administer if properly developed and provided with full time superintendent.

Other land uses -
Mining resources:
None

Agricultural resources:
None

Grazing:
None

Cultivated crops:
None

Timber:
Negligible market value, but good recreational and scenic value.

Hunting & Fishing uses:
Small

Power Resources:
None

Irrigation Resources:
None
Ownership:

Railways: None
State: Leased for 25 years (1930-1955) 252.8
Municipalities: None
Private: None
Total alienated lands

Mining claims:
Grazing permits and withdrawals: None
Power permits: None
Total permit acreage

National forest lands:
Public domain: None
Reclamation projects: None
Indian lands: None
Total public lands

Total acreage 252.8

Land values: $125 - $150 per Acre

History of project: Adverse report submitted in 1917.
By letter of Dec. 3, 1930, Mr. Cammerer wrote
the Hon. J.C. Ketcham stating that an investigation was made, but
that this area should be made into a state park as it contained the
same general landscape as the state park in Porter County, Indiana,
and was only a short distance from that park.
Disapproved by the Director January 23, 1933.

Persons interested:
Hon. J.C. Ketcham

Itinerary (Sheet to be attached)

Bibliography:

List of photographs, maps and printed information submitted:
(Sheet to be attached)

Note: All maps which are specially prepared by the
Regional Offices should conform to one of the
following standard sizes:
Letter size - 18" x 24" - 24" x 36"
Warren Dunes State Park - Berrien County

Department of Conservation, Lansing, 193


---.-----,Lands Disposecl, Il]n'era,l, Rights Reserued.

---.-----.Lands, for Sale at price marked on plat per acre.

---.-----._Tax Homestead Land, not in the market.

---.-----._Tax Homestead Land for Sale at price per acre marked on plat.
STATE PARK LAND
in
BERRIEN COUNTY

WARREN DUNES STATE PARK.
(Leased to State Jan. 1, 1930, for 25 year term)

Town 6 South, Range 20 West, Sec. 24, South fr. half of SW frl. 4
  25, NE 4 of NW 4 78.36 acres
  " 25, S 2 of SW 4 of NW 4 40.00 "
  " 26, NE frl. 4 20.00 "
  " 26, N 2 of S frl. 4 54.50 "

TOTAL AREA 252.48 ACRES
WARNER DUNES STATE PARK, BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Report on Practicability of Converting this area into a National Park

The area known as Warren Dunes State Park is an irregularly shaped, 253 acre tract (see attached map) located on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan near the town of Sawyer on the southwestern coast of Berrien County, Michigan.

It is about eighty (80) miles from Chicago and about two hundred miles from Detroit in a heavily populated region. Trunk line highway U.S. #12 passes the park about a mile to the eastward making it exceedingly convenient of access.

The park is owned by the Edward K. Warren Foundation. Since 1930 it has been leased to the State of Michigan for a twenty-five year period in return for One Dollar ($1.00) consideration. It is administered by the Department of Conservation. A clause in the lease states that the property is to be left in a natural state, i.e., no development work is to be done.

The area though small (252.8A) is a very fine one from a scenic standpoint and interesting for its geological and biological types. At the present time it is undeveloped except for a small wooden foot bridge where a narrow foot path (the only means of access) crosses a creek. This creek, ten to fifteen feet wide, meanders in a general westerly direction inside the south boundary of the property. It is a vigorously flowing little stream with a sand bottom. A visitor parks his car on a small natural level space south of the creek which serves as a parking area. Crossing the bridge he follows westward a path which skirts the edge of the creek valley until it emerges from the dunes onto a broad beach.

There is approximately one and a quarter miles of lake frontage all of which has an excellent sand beach. From the waters edge the beach extends back at a very gentle slope for a distance of one to two hundred feet where it meets a long narrow ridge of small dunes some twenty feet high paralleling the shore. Behind these dunes is a depression the bottom of which is about lake level. This is a hundred feet more or less wide, and back of it slopes of the large dunes commence. The following sectional diagram will give a rough idea of the formation.

Rough Sectional Diagram on Approximate West & East Line
The large dunes are some hundred or more feet tall. Apparently at one time there was a continuous dune paralleling the shore, but years ago the wind started work on it and eroded a section north of the central part of the area. What now remains of the once continuous ridge is a large timber covered dune extending from about the center of the property south to the creek. North of this dune is the wind-blown valley extending east and west, and north of the valley is a high dune raw on the windward side and timbered to the leeward. The following diagram will help convey the picture.

Rough Sectional Diagram on Approximate North & South Line.

Back of these larger dunes is a chaotic arrangement of successively smaller dunes extending a mile or so eastward and eventually tapering off to nothing and losing themselves in the gently rolling country side. For the most part they are timber covered except for occasional banks of blow sand.

The scenic effects offered by the area are striking. High points afford view over the vast expanse of water with its ever changing color and motion. The great sweeps of sand have a beauty of line and an impressive effect of waste and barrenness. They are a characteristic and interesting formation.

The plant life of the area is very interesting. On the first low sand ridge east of the beach scattered, sparse clumps of willow, beach plum, popple, and dune grass occur. On the larger wooded dunes I noticed in the course of a walk oak, maple, linden, ash, ironwood, sassafras, white pine, and hemlock. The smaller shrubbery types included witch hazel, red dogwood, beach plum, common juniper, maple leaf viburnum. Of vines I identified wild grape, bittersweet, and poison ivy. A great variety of interesting and colorful herbaceous and semi-woody small plants were in evidence. In this region several different ecological zones meet, and plant varieties and species peculiar to each zone are found growing side by side. For this reason this part of the dune country has a great attraction for the botanist and biologist. I have been told that some of these woodlands have never been cut over. The size and decayed condition of fallen logs observed in some of these woods does make this statement seem plausible.

In summarizing the attractions of the Warren Dunes State Park I would say that it is an excellent section and example of the
dune formations of this lake shore region. Its scenic qualities are extraordinary and afford many an interesting detail and thrilling panorama of land and lakescape. Its plant life is of exceptional interest to layman and botanist because of the existence of an extraordinary number of different species rarely found growing in close association. Students of dune geology will find much to interest them.

In considering the park as a potential National Park reserve one must recognize the fact that the existing tract is very irregular in shape and small in area (253A). If the area were to be developed either as a recreational area or as a natural preserve, considerable enlargement would be desirable to avoid the evils springing from an intense concentration of use in a limited space. It would be desirable to add to the tract to make it an entire and regular block and to extend it up to five to ten times its present area. Besides additional dune land and lake frontage it is desirable that enough land be purchased in the more level country east of the dunes to afford space for auto parking and such accommodations as would be necessary to facilitate the desired degree of public use of the park. It is estimated that the cost of land about the present tract would average in the neighborhood of Two Hundred Dollars per acre or more.

In the event that it is possible to acquire the desired acreage and topography for an adequate park the question arises as to the justification for a National Park at this place. An easy hours drive to the west is the Indiana Dunes State Park (2500A). An hours drive to the north in Van Buren county is the area, several thousand acres in extent, which is being optioned at the present time with the intent of creating a lake shore park to be developed with U. S. government funds and ultimately administered by the Michigan Department of Conservation. Both of these areas are in lake shore dune lands similar in character to the Warren Dunes region. Both now are or will be developed for public use as recreational parks. With this fact in mind I feel that the federal government is not justified in developing a National Park for public recreational use at Warren Dunes.

While a National recreational park is not in my opinion justifiable here the possibility of a National Park reserve dedicated to the preservation in its natural state of a typical example of the lake shore dune country with its flora and wild life may well be justifiable. The characteristic dune country is sufficiently unique in beauty and interest to warrant the preservation of a typical section in its natural state. The neighboring Indiana Dunes State Park is so intensively used for public recreation that its natural cycles of plant life are being disturbed and its plants suffering injury. This condition will doubtless tend to become worse rather than better as time brings an added volume of visitors and amusement seekers. The same condition may be anticipated at the Van Buren area. In time there may be no place where the dune country and its wild life can exist naturally, free from human violation or interference. To forestall this impending calamity by creating a suitable preserve might well be a justifiable government project.
In summation, regarding the Warren Dunes State Park as a potential National Park, I would say that at the present the tract is too small, too irregular, and too lacking in level land to constitute a complete National Park site. While I question the wisdom, under any conditions, of the governments developing the area for intensive recreational use (boating, bathing, camping, etc.) I do believe that if the area can be adequately enlarged, there is a measure of justification for a National Park reserve at this place for the preservation of a section of the lake shore duneland and its wild plant and animal life in a natural state.

Before the government definitely rejects this area, I suggest a further study of present and probable future wild life (plant and animal) conditions at Indiana Dunes State Park and at the proposed Van Buren Recreational Area, in order that an accurate estimate may be made of the need for a separate area, not subject to intensive human use, for the preservation under natural conditions of the flora and fauna of the dunes.

If it is conclusively proven that such a need exists, then I consider that Warren Dunes State Park would be an admirable nucleus for a larger National Park preserve which would include the present park acreage and adjacent lands.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Sterling Myrick
Inspector, Fifth Region
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STATE PARK DIVISION
812 Illinois Bldg.
Indianapolis, Ind.

June 27, 1935

State Park Conservation Work,
Washington, D. C.

Attention Mr. Wirth:

Subject: Warren Dunes State Park, Michigan

My dear Sir:

Attached is a report on the Warren Dunes State Park as a national park or monument. This report was prepared and submitted by Inspector Sterling Myrick. The report indicates that the area is now a state park and is too small for recreational development.

The proximity of Indiana Dunes State Park and the Van Buren Recreational Area would not warrant the establishment of a large area.

Mr. Myrick suggests that it would best serve the public if preserved in its natural state. This can be done by the State of Michigan. Therefore, I do not recommend this area for a National Park or Monument.

Yours very truly,

Paul V. Brown, Regional Officer

George W. O'cott, Inspector
Fifth Region
State Park Conservation Work

GWO:46S

CC: Myrick
Jenkins
File