

A LEGACY OF STEWARDSHIP

Dune Acres has a long history of interest in native plants and caring for its unique parkland. The Town has set aside more than two-hundred acres for town parks over the years, sometimes at considerable monetary sacrifice by its citizens. Most of this property is maintained as natural areas by volunteers, town employees, and ecological contractors. Donations, environmental grants, and town budget appropriations provide funding for maintenance and restoration efforts. Countless residents have contributed to this ongoing legacy of stewardship, ensuring our woods and wetlands will provide quiet enjoyment for future generations.



INSPIRATION

For more than a century, Dune Acres has been a destination for those seeking to study and enjoy the wonders of the Indiana Dunes. Today, there are numerous natural areas in and adjacent to our town where you can observe native plant communities first hand and appreciate ongoing work in restoration and stewardship.

Plampin Park at the corner of East Road and Lupine Lane is a mosaic of mesic-prairie and savanna with a seasonal wetland that attracts a host of insects, birds, and wildlife.

The *Heenan Trail* begins at the end of Summit Drive and winds through high-quality sand savanna and blowout before emerging at the Lake Michigan beach.

Lupine Lane Prairie and *Howes Prairie* are fine examples of rolling savanna and mesophytic prairie that can be accessed from the parking area on Lupine Lane. The *Cowles Bog Trail* ambles through a world-class natural area that is home to an extraordinary diversity of plant species.

Clubhouse Dune and *Crest Drive Park* have been restored through a grant partnership with NOAA and Indiana DNR. These Town parks provide excellent wildlife habitat and are a testament to the community spirit and dedicated volunteerism of Dune Acres residents.



TOWN OF DUNE ACRES

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NATURAL LANDSCAPING IN DUNE ACRES



Dune Acres is part of a world class natural area – the Indiana Dunes. We offer here a brief description of this fascinating environment, with the hope that you will become an active land steward. By restoring and maintaining your property, the floristic treasures of our dunes will be preserved for future generations.



BRINGING NATURE HOME

Many residents endeavor to maintain the native dunes vegetation as part of their residential landscaping. With a modest investment in time and resources, your property can be a self-sustaining native ecosystem—one that provides subtle beauty in every season and affords valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Consider these tips for success:

It is easier to preserve your existing vegetation than it is to restore it. Take measures to prevent erosion and other damage to the native flora. Become familiar with the plants surrounding your home over a year of changing seasons. That modest small tree in winter may reveal itself as a showy flowering dogwood come springtime.

Invasive plants represent a great threat to both public and private lands in Dune Acres. Many of these species—like burning bush and Japanese barberry—have been introduced through well-intentioned home landscaping projects and are extremely harmful to the dune ecosystems. Please avoid introducing such plants to our community and strive to remove them if you find them on your property.

When selecting plantings for your home landscape, choose those that are native to the Indiana Dunes. Natives have distinct advantages for the property-owner. They are naturally adapted to this dry, sandy, and often windy area and require little maintenance, once established. With more than six-hundred plant species indigenous to the Dune Acres area, there is certainly a plant to fit any situation.

To learn more about native plants and invasive species, or to arrange for an “environmental health analysis” of your property, contact town hall.



NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES

There are several types of ecological or native plant communities in Dune Acres. These are defined by proximity to the lake, aspect, soil type and moisture, and other factors. Your property probably fits into one of the following general types. Some extraordinarily rare plants grow in town parks and residential property in Dune Acres—perhaps yours!



BEACH, FOREDUNE, HIGH DUNE

On the open sandy foredunes of Lake Michigan is a very distinctive habitat characterized by hearty species such as marram grass, sand cherry, juniper, beach wormwood, and the federally-endangered Pitcher’s thistle.



SAVANNA

Much of the land in Dune Acres is considered sand savanna—a gradient between the eastern hardwood forests and western prairies. This rolling landscape features black and white oak above a constantly-evolving tapestry of grasses and wildflowers, including lupine, puccoon, milkweed, goldenrod, and asters.



NORTH SLOPE BACK DUNES

On the shadier north and east-facing dunes, white and red oaks are intermixed with small trees and shrubs such as witch hazel, serviceberry, wild blueberries, and Viburnum. Early-blooming wildflowers like bellwort, bloodroot, Hepatica, and Trillium are a fleeting delight in April and May.



HARDWOOD COVES

The few shady moist areas of town are a more successional landscape. They play host to white oaks, sugar maples, dogwood, may apples and ferns.

