

URGENT EDITOR'S PICK

Possible Ogden Dunes revetment sparks debate

Christina Gibbs Jun 27, 2023 0

ODGEN DUNES — The possible construction of an armor stone revetment in Ogden Dunes has been challenged by the non-profit group Save the Dunes.

The organization filed an administrative appeal June 19 after the Indiana Department of Natural Resources approved Ogden-Dunes' request for a 2,970-foot-long, 10-foot-wide revetment along Lake Michigan's lakeshore, according to a statement from Save the Dunes.

Save the Dunes is concerned about more erosion in the future if the revetment is constructed, executive director Betsy Maher said. "When you harden a part of the shoreline, more hardening occurs down the shoreline." The revetment would restrict the natural flow of sand and water, which need space to flow unobstructed, she said. The construction of the structure could lead to a process called scouring, Maher said, in which water erodes the sediments that surround the base of manmade structures.



A shipwreck lies just off the beach in Ogden Dunes, becoming visible only when the water level drops low enough. [Joseph S. Pete](#)

Save the Dunes is also concerned about native plants and animals along the lakeshore, Maher said, as their habitat would be decreased. Furthermore, Save the Dunes alleges that the revetment works against the public trust doctrine, since the structure would protect private homes or private interests over public access to the lakeshore, Maher said.



Swimmers at Ogden Dunes enjoy a dip in Lake Michigan on New Year's Day.
Doug Ross, The Times

With its proximity to Indiana Dunes National Park, Save the Dunes is also concerned that the construction of the revetment would contradict the National Park Service's Shoreline Restoration and Management Plan, Maher said. The plan "recommends methods to remedy erosion and damage to the dunes and beaches of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore," according to the plan's language. Essentially, the plan recommends annual beach renourishment, Maher said, the act of bringing more sand in the beaches. The revetment's potential to cause more lakeshore erosion would be imposed upon this management plan, Maher said.

The beach is public land, that's the part that we're hopefully bringing to light with this appeal," Maher said. "We need to be thinking about what we want this beach to look like not just now but 50 years from now."