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# National Park Service nonnative plant control in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

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## **National Park Service nonnative plant control in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore**

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Invasive plants have become a growing threat to plant diversity and hydrology in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Invasive plants compete with native plants for nutrients and sunlight, and certain invasive species have been known to completely take over certain areas of wetlands, nearly destroying entire ecosystems. The Dunes Lakeshore contains over 1,400 plants species and is one of the top ten most diverse national parks in the United States. The mission statement of the National Park Service is to “preserve for the educational, inspirational, and recreational use of the public certain portions of the Indiana Dunes.” In order to properly maintain this unique habitat for future generations, a variety of techniques have been implemented to reduce the growth and germination of many nonnative plants in high quality areas such as Cowles Bog, West Beach, and Tolleston Dunes. We focused on depleting the seed bank of invasive plants by targeting certain species such as garlic mustard, Dame’s Rocket, and Crown Vetch before they seeded. Backpack sprayers, brush cutters and loppers were used to kill invasive plants within the park and GPS was used to monitor our progress.

*Information about the Authors:*

Jacob Halpin studies biology and psychology at Valparaiso University. This was his first year working for the resource management department of the National Park Service. He hopes to attend graduate school to become a physician’s assistant.

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