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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town of Ogden Dunes Abandons Plan to Build a Stone Revetment Along Lake Michigan's Shoreline

After nearly two years of hard-fought litigation brought by Save the Dunes, the Town of Ogden Dunes announced it has “abandoned [its] project” to build a massive stone revetment along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Save the Dunes’ lawsuit challenged a permit issued by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) to allow this project.

In a legal filing, the Town’s attorney represented that the Town “no longer intends to proceed with the permitted activity . . . has formally abandoned the project[,] and has no intention of acting under the permit.”

Save the Dunes, represented by the Conservation Law Center, brought the permit appeal in June 2023 because DNR approved the second-half of the Town’s mile-long stone wall without delineating the natural ordinary high-water mark (“OHWM”) of Lake Michigan, which is the boundary between private property and public lakefront held in trust by the State for all Hoosiers to enjoy. Without delineating that property boundary, DNR could not have assessed or mitigated for the full impacts the revetment would have on public trust land.

“Save the Dunes is thrilled that the Town of Ogden Dunes chose to abandon the revetment project. We advocated for this result because, when shorelines are hardened with such structures, it can decrease public access along the Lakeshore; it can increase erosion farther and farther down the beach; and it can contribute to the degradation of water quality and disruption of the natural dunes’ delicate ecosystem along the Lake,” said Betsy Maher, Executive Director of Save the Dunes.

The fight is not over, however. Conservation Law Center and Save the Dunes remain concerned with DNR’s unlawful delineation process that allows the public trust beaches of Lake Michigan in Indiana to be privatized one construction project at a time. “We will continue to pursue all legal avenues to ensure DNR correctly applies the State’s public trust laws and regulations intended to safeguard Lake Michigan for current and future generations of Hoosiers,” said Christian Freitag, Executive Director of the Conservation Law Center. “Under Indiana law, DNR is tasked with protecting our shared public trust resources and we intend to make sure the agency does its job.”

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About Save the Dunes: Established in 1952, Save the Dunes protects and advocates for the Indiana dunes, Lake Michigan, and the surrounding natural areas for the health and vitality of the environment, and the people who live, work, and recreate in Northwest Indiana. Save the Dunes creates collaborative partnerships across the aisles, across sectors, and across the Northwest Indiana lakeshore to protect and defend the Indiana dunes from a variety of threats. We work to enhance and protect the incredible biodiversity of our natural spaces through our work in Advocacy, Conservation, and Community Engagement. You can visit Save the Dunes website at <https://savedunes.org>, and on follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/savedunes.

About Conservation Law Center: Conservation Law Center is a public interest environmental law firm established in 2005, offering pro bono legal services to nonprofit organizations in Indiana and around the country on issues related to water quality, freshwater ecosystems, land conservation, and endangered species. Visit conservationlawcenter.org for more information. You can also follow Conservation Law Center's work on Facebook and Instagram @conservlawcentr.