



**Capital  
Development  
Board**  
Building a Better Illinois

**State of Illinois**  
JB Pritzker, Governor

**Illinois Capital Development Board**  
Jim Underwood, Executive Director

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
February 5, 2024

**CONTACT:**  
Lauren Grenlund  
[Lauren.Grenlund@illinois.gov](mailto:Lauren.Grenlund@illinois.gov)

## **Illinois Beach State Park Shoreline Stabilization Project Earns Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines Verification**

*Illinois Beach State Park First Project in Illinois with WEDG Verification*

**Springfield** – The Illinois Beach Shoreline Stabilization Project in Lake County has achieved Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG) Verification, Governor Pritzker, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Capital Development Board announced today. WEDG is a national rating system that provides technical reviews of the design and construction of waterfront projects. Illinois Beach State Park earned the gold standard under the guidelines outlined in WEDG’s Version 3.0.

Governor JB Pritzker has invested \$73 million for constructing shoreline stabilization structures in three locations within Illinois Beach State Park. The revolutionary system will preserve 2.2 miles of shoreline and mitigate growing erosion concerns. The funding is made possible by the Governor’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan, the largest capital plan in state history.

“Illinois Beach State Park is the final remaining undeveloped lakefront in Illinois, providing unique recreational opportunities, geological significance, and critical habitat for endangered species,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “Our historic Rebuild Illinois capital plan ensures we can protect the park from shoreline erosion and dune loss, maintaining this dynamic resource for Illinois residents.”

The Illinois Beach State Park stabilization project marks the first inland freshwater project, first Great Lakes project, and first project in the Midwest to achieve WEDG verification. The Waterfront Alliance, alongside reviewers in architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, and design industries determined the project exceeded the requirements to earn WEDG Verification. The evaluation included recognition for the integrated habitat elements and reuse of on-site materials like driftwood for construction and ecosystem purposes.

*The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) oversees the construction of new state facilities, such as prisons, state parks, mental health institutions, and college and university projects. In addition, CDB is responsible for renovation and rehabilitation projects at over 8,770 state-owned buildings spread over more than 100 million square feet of floor space.*

Illinois Beach State Park, home to unique prairie and wetland habitat and a beloved local and regional recreational draw, features the last remaining natural shoreline in the state. However, the shore is constantly battered by Lake Michigan waves, making it a priority for preservation and mitigation efforts.

Some parts of the park's coastline have receded by as much as 100 feet in one year. Aerial photos and maps show how the shoreline, roads and dune ecosystems have been drastically altered; visitors can see evidence of some of the damage in person.

"The Illinois Department of Resources, Governor Pritzker, and the Capital Development Board have a shared commitment to protecting the precious Illinois Beach shoreline and the native species that live there," **said IDNR Director Natalie Phelps Finnie**. "Future generations will be able to enjoy this unique and beautiful Great Lakes shoreline because of the important work we're doing today."

The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) is overseeing the design and construction for Illinois Beach State Park in accordance with the protocol for state-appropriated construction projects.

"The Capital Development Board is proud to manage the intervention and stabilization of the shoreline system at Illinois Beach State Park," **said CDB Executive Director, Jim Underwood**. "By defending against the natural shoreline transitory processes, we are protecting, preserving, and enhancing the existing infrastructure."

SmithGroup, with consultant Edgewater Resources, serves as the bridging firm for the project, developing the concept level solution for controlling the further loss of shoreline, including providing design that influences the littoral transport throughout the park and provides guidelines for habitat protection. Contracting lead, Michels, Inc. has placed over 300,000 tons of stone and 430,000 cubic yards of sand at the site. Moffatt & Nichol is providing engineering design services during construction and Collins Engineering is providing construction observation and inspection at Illinois Beach State Park.

Construction began in early spring 2023 with the delivery of the excavator and construction materials via barge. The project is nearing breakwater completion, with habitat work beginning in the spring with substantial completion to follow.

*The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) oversees the construction of new state facilities, such as prisons, state parks, mental health institutions, and college and university projects. In addition, CDB is responsible for renovation and rehabilitation projects at over 8,770 state-owned buildings spread over more than 100 million square feet of floor space.*