

Sand is Sand...or Is It?

This activity is to be done as part of your visit to the dune area. Answer the following questions to help you learn more about this resource. A hand lens or small magnifying glass will be helpful.

- What do you see? (sand, rocks, water, plants, animals, people, litter, etc.)
- What is sand? Pick up some and examine it. Is it wet or dry, smooth or rough?
- What can you find? Record everything you find in your handful of sand.
- What size, shape, and color are the bits of shell, rocks, and minerals?
- What happens when you pour the sand through your hand?
- What evidence of moving sand can you find? (Hint: look at the trees, grasses and other plants, man-made structures, your foot prints).

The sand you are looking at probably originated from the south shore of Lake Ontario.

- How do you think the sand got to this location?
- What are the roles of wind, waves, and high water in this process?
- Where might this sand go from here?
- What will happen when this supply of sand has been depleted?

You can also spend time examining the plants growing in the sand.

- Do you find many plants growing here?
- What do they look like?
- Where are they growing? (sun, shade, sloped land or flat, near water)
- How far apart are they spaced?
 - Compare them to the plants that grow in your yard at home.
- How do the characteristics of sand influence the plants growing here?

You may also want to compare a section of dune that has plants growing on it with a section that does not. Sketch a picture showing what these sections look like. Be sure to include grasses, shrubs, and trees.

- How do the plants help to protect the dunes from the effects of wind, waves, and water?
- What happens to the dune when plants are removed or trampled or trees die and fall over?



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