

Chicago Wilderness

Dear Chicago Wilderness Community:

As you all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in necessary and prudent measures to minimize the risk of spreading the virus and lessen the healthcare burden that this pandemic is creating. Consequently, The Chicago Wilderness Steering Committee has made the decision to cancel Congress 2020 scheduled for April 2, 2020.

Thank you for your patience as we work through the logistics associated with cancelling Congress. We would like to offer a very special thank you to all our generous [sponsors](#), the more than 350 individuals who had pre-registered for the event, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and all our speakers and partners. Also, we want to offer a sincere thanks to the entire group of volunteers who have spent nearly a year preparing and planning for this day, especially our incredible Congress 2020 Co-Chairs, Lydia Uhler (Forest Preserves of Cook County) and Edward Warden (Shedd Aquarium). Your hard work and dedication is deeply appreciated

We plan to take this opportunity to take a deep breath, assess and evaluate potential virtual options for portions of the event, and identify next steps which will be communicated with you as soon as possible. Information about [refunds](#) and options for you as a registrant will be provided soon.

As you know, the Chicago Wilderness Alliance relies on contributions from partners and sponsorship to maintain our important work. We wanted to share with you one sponsor's response to the cancellation of Congress. Nicor Gas (represented by Jim Jerozal, Vice Chair of Chicago Wilderness) has indicated that the Nicor Gas policy around their philanthropic giving is focused on the organization, not the event. With that said, Nicor Gas desires to support Chicago Wilderness by not asking for a refund and providing even further help to educate about their [weatherization](#) and [energy efficiency](#) programs by engaging with CW members. This example proves that even through this difficult time, we stand together as an alliance. To discuss redirection or refund of your sponsorship gift, please contact [Laura Reilly](#).

We hope that during these challenging times, you are able to stay healthy, unplug, and get outside to rejuvenate and restore in the beauty of nature that is Chicago Wilderness! Thank you for your understanding and patience as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kessler, Chair, Chicago Wilderness
Executive Director, McHenry County Conservation District

Jim Jerozal, Vice Chair, Chicago Wilderness
Director, Energy Efficiency, Nicor Gas

Laura Reilly, Coordinator, Chicago Wilderness