2022 ANNUAL REPORT
FOCUSED ON ACTION

Chicago Wilderness Alliance
In 2022, we formally changed our name to the Chicago Wilderness Alliance. The name better reflects the reality: together, our partners are purpose driven, active, and united around the urgent conservation issues facing our communities.

As an Alliance, our most important work—this past year and every year—is to identify conservation needs and be a place where partners can coordinate and collaborate across the four-state region.

Our 250 partner organizations in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin are a collective of passionate, informed people who make a much bigger impact together than any organization or individual could on their own.

The Alliance’s work is only possible because of your commitment to identify and implement nature-based solutions that make the whole planet healthier for people and wildlife.

CONGRESS SET THE STAGE FOR THE FUTURE

Every two years, the Chicago Wilderness Alliance hosts a Congress to inspire dialogue, catalyze new ideas, and create opportunities for collaborative action. This past November, 450 enthusiastic people gathered at our Congress in Chicago to talk about the future of conservation. It was a bigger, younger, and more diverse crowd than we’ve ever had. Your participation reflects where the energy of the Alliance is headed.

We learned about the massive potential of landmark investments at the federal level—such as the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act—and invited your leadership and input on the seven Green Vision Initiatives that will shape the livability of our region (more details inside). We were also honored to receive the 2022 President’s Award from the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

There are exciting times ahead for the Alliance! We are counting on you to stay involved, or get more deeply involved, in 2023 and beyond.
Advanced Training for Conservation Practitioners

Networking and learning are a focal point for the Alliance, and 2022 was a standout year. All partners are encouraged to join Green Initiative teams, host Cafes, or submit information for the Alliance to share throughout our network. 2022 highlights include:

- Partners created 17 online Cafes and webinars on topics ranging from urban forestry inventories to federal funding for conservation
- More than 50 people attended our first-ever educational Field Day in Will County to learn about sustainable agriculture practices and set the stage for Field Days in coming years
- 18 partners hosted City Nature Challenge events to advance citizen science in their communities
- Partners issued 15 action alerts through our Government Relations Policy Action and Advocacy system
- More than 100 online meetings brought partners together to provide leadership, share information, and brainstorm goals and strategies; many are available on the Alliance’s YouTube channel
- Multiple Alliance partners hosted in-person prescribed burn trainings
- A website hosting Green Vision data and mapping information launched at hub.chicagowilderness.org
- The Alliance added funding opportunities to our already robust Community Calendar and Career Center
- 7 online workshops on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) in the conservation workplace were attended by 720 people and supported by a grant from the U.S. Forest Service and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry Program. The funding also provided a baseline culture assessment among partner organizations, and in 2023 will support the Increasing Equitable Access to Nature Initiative, which now encompasses all of the Alliance’s equity work.
The work of the Alliance—your collective actions—are guided by seven Green Vision Initiatives and their related goals. In 2022, teams across the region clarified the intention behind each initiative.

How do we put the Alliance’s values into action? What can we do as an Alliance that can’t be done alone? Where are gaps and inequities in knowledge and action? What will move the Alliance forward in 2023? All skills, and all skill levels, are needed to complete this important work. Please join us!

**The Green Vision Initiatives: 2022**

1. Advancing a cooperative weed management plan for the region
2. Emphasizing invasives removal on private lands
3. Standardizing best practices, training, and data collection about prescribed burns
4. Conducting an in-person Field Day in Will County to share best conservation farming practices
5. Sharing knowledge through an upcoming Field Day in Kane County and series of Cafés
6. Identifying regional initiatives to connect with to advance green initiative goals.
7. Amplifying the gROWing Chicago initiative to advance habitat on rights of way
8. Taking advantage of current, but rapidly disappearing, opportunities for land conservation
9. Building on Congress enthusiasm to identify and map priority parcels
10. Incorporating equity into all initiatives
11. Conducting an audit of partner organizations to capture and share the very best inclusivity work in the region, and identify places where more effort is needed
12. Incorporating climate goals into all initiatives
13. Determining optimal ways to connect with broad climate-related goals throughout the region
15. Incorporating water goals into all initiatives
16. Working closely with Green Infrastructure Initiative on watershed-level priorities
17. Assessing region-wide water data for usability and compatibility across agencies and sectors

**YOUR PLACE TO MAKE AN IMPACT**

Visit [Hub.Chicagowilderness.org](http://Hub.Chicagowilderness.org) for more details
2022
By the Numbers

250
Partner Organizations

5,000
People in the Alliance

17
Webinars

3,500
People learning online

450
People at Congress
# 2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2022

## REVENUE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership Dues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsorships and Donations</td>
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<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Application Fees</td>
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<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$319,442</strong></td>
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## EXPENSES

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<tr>
<td>General and Administrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program and Activities</td>
<td>$165,618</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$280,043</strong></td>
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## CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$39,399</strong></td>
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## NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$369,813</strong></td>
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## TOTAL NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets, End of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$409,212</strong></td>
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The fiscal sponsor of the Chicago Wilderness Alliance is the Friends of the Forest Preserves, an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Friends of the Forest Preserves  
411 S. Wells Street, Ste 300, Chicago, IL 60607-3927  
Federal EIN: 36-4519273
2022
STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair: Elizabeth S. Kessler, MBA, CPRE, McHenry County Conservation District

Vice-Chair: Jim J. Jerozal, Nicor Gas

Treasurer: Mike Glester, Magnolia Land Partners

Executive Secretary: Nathanael J. Pilla, Orbis Environmental Consulting

Jerry Adelmann, Openlands

Jim Anderson, Citizens for Conservation

Michelle Carr, The Nature Conservancy

Leslie Dorworth, Illinois-Indiana SeaGrant

Cathy B. Geraghty, Forest Preserves of Cook County

John Rogner, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Amy Rosenthal, The Field Museum

David Shimberg, Riverwoods Preservation Council

Maggie Soliz, Kane-Dupage Soil and Water Conservation District, AIWSCD

Victoria Wittig, Ph.D., Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership

Laura Reilly, MA, Chicago Wilderness Alliance