

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHICAGO WILDERNESS REGION CELEBRATES  
“LEAVE NO CHILD INSIDE” MONTH**

CHICAGO, IL – All children should have the opportunity to play in a stream, wade through prairie grass, and catch fireflies. Yet American children are playing outside less and less often. And many don't have access to safe green spaces where they can connect with nature.

June is Leave No Child Inside Month, based on the regional movement of the same name. Through Leave No Child Inside, organizations are striving to reconnect children to nature and promote the Chicago Wilderness Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights states that every child has the right to:

1. Camp under the stars
2. Catch and release fish, frogs and insects
3. Celebrate heritage
4. Climb a tree
5. Discover prairies, dunes, forests, savannas, and wetlands
6. Explore nature in neighborhoods and cities
7. Follow a trail
8. Learn to swim
9. Plant a flower
10. Play in the mud

“One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is a love of nature,” says Melinda Pruett-Jones, Executive Director of the Chicago Wilderness alliance. “Being outside in nature is good for their physical health and overall well-being. Throughout June, Chicago Wilderness members offer a wide variety of events that let families get outside in nature, have fun, and share quality time together.”

Dozens of organizations across the greater Chicago region are offering a series of family events featuring lively activities – like catching-and-releasing insects, playing with mud, and building a fort – designed to nurture children's natural sense of wonder.

“The Chicago Park District helps Chicagoans discover and connect to nature right here in the City,” said Michael P. Kelly, Chicago Park District General Superintendent & CEO. “We strive to put children first, by using the Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights as a framework, to make nature play easy and fun for young children and their families.”

Some of the larger events are listed below; for a complete list of events, visit [www.chicagowilderness.org/Incimonth](http://www.chicagowilderness.org/Incimonth) (check individual web sites for possible program changes due to inclement weather).

### **Family Field Day at St. James Farm**

Saturday, May 25, 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM at St. James Farm, Warrenville, IL

Enjoy a special celebration at this historic DuPage County Forest Preserve, featuring canine and equestrian performances, tours, nature-based kids’ activities, antique tractor displays, bluegrass music, and more. [www.dupageforest.com](http://www.dupageforest.com)

### **Family Adventure Day: Leave No Child Inside Kick-Off**

Saturday, June 1, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Northerly Island

Enjoy an adventure with your family at a natural area right on Chicago’s lakefront. Chicago Park District's Family Adventure Day will offer families the opportunity to explore the great outdoors on Northerly Island, focusing on nature activities such as fort building, kite flying, nature hikes, fishing, creating nature-inspired crafts, and much more. This day of outdoor fun is targeted towards early childhood aged children, but has activities available for kids of all ages.

[www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com)

### **Beaubien Woods Celebration & Environmental Day**

Saturday, June 8, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at Beaubien Woods Picnic Pavilion, Chicago, IL

Several environmental and conservation organizations are hosting a day-long celebration featuring activities such as guided hikes, canoeing and fishing on the lake, nature and art projects, yoga classes, scavenger hunts, and more. Refreshments will be provided, but everyone is encouraged to bring a picnic lunch. Admission is free and the event is rain or shine. For more information and to register: <http://enviroday2013.eventbrite.com/>

### **National Get Outdoors Day Picnic and Open House at Dunes Learning Center**

Saturday, June 8, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at Dunes Learning Center, Chesterton, IN

Located inside Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the Center will host a day of outdoor family fun including trail hikes, river exploration, kayak demonstrations, camp crafts and lunch on the lawn. Admission is free. [www.duneslearningcenter.org](http://www.duneslearningcenter.org)

### **Explore the Forest**

Sunday, June 9, 12:00 to 4:00 PM at Crabtree Nature Center, Barrington Hills, IL

Dive in to summer and experience the many ways the Forest Preserve District of Cook County

has been fulfilling its mission to preserve, protect and restore our local scenic beauty and biodiversity. Kids will have the opportunity to cast fishing poles, ride bikes, and play in the Explore Nature area while parents can speak with a wildlife biologist, ecologist or police officer, get a free bike tune-up and learn about all our recreation and volunteering opportunities. For more information, visit <http://fpdcc.com/events>.

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### **Chicago Wilderness**

Chicago Wilderness is a regional alliance that connects people and nature. More than 260 public, private and corporate organizations work together to restore local nature and improve the quality of life for all who live here, by protecting the lands and waters on which we all depend. The four key initiatives of Chicago Wilderness—to restore the health of local nature, protect green infrastructure, mitigate climate change, and leave no child inside—reflect our commitment to using science and emerging knowledge, as well as a collaborative approach to conservation, to benefit all the region’s residents. For more information, visit [www.chicagowilderness.org](http://www.chicagowilderness.org).