Chicago Wilderness Alliance Government Relations Community (GRC)
Priorities, Principles and Procedures

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance (the Alliance) is a diverse organization committed to building and implementing a regional plan for vibrant nature that improves environmental and human health, promotes better quality of life, and benefits our collective home.

The Government Relations Community considers potential policy engagements through a process that reflects current Alliance initiatives and the political landscape. The Alliance mission is not policy driven. We acknowledge the advocacy work of our partner organizations. To that end, the community seeks to identify and facilitate opportunities to amplify our collective voice on issues that impact the biodiversity in the region. To ensure transparency and recognize that many of our partners vary in their respective policy positions, each ActionAlert/email communication/etc. will delineate which organization said action item originated from.

Below is an outline of Chicago Wilderness Alliance’s priorities and principles, serving as a general guide to members seeking support from the Alliance or its membership on a policy matter. This outline does not list specific policies as those are part of a moment in time and this guide is meant to be a consistent directing document. This outline is a living document regularly updated by the Chicago Wilderness Alliance Government Relations Community.

Please contact Ellicia Sanchez (ellicia.sanchez@tnc.org), Michelle Uting (michelle.uting@cookcountyil.gov) or Marybeth Johnson (mjohnson@lpzoo.org) with questions or concerns.

Green Vision Initiatives
Our Green Vision Initiatives include seven key thematic areas:
Managing Healthy Landscapes
Growing with Agriculture
Prioritizing Green Infrastructure
Protecting Landscapes for Biodiversity Conservation
Increasing Equitable Access to Nature
Taking Climate Action
Protecting Healthy Water

Types of actions that can be requested (by Chicago Wilderness Alliance partners) via the Advocacy Action Request form
   1. Share info with Chicago Wilderness Alliance partners working on this issue
   2. Share on Chicago Wilderness Alliance social media
   3. Share action alert via Chicago Wilderness Alliance eblast
   4. Create CWA Cafe on this topic/issue
   5. Request CWA Partners write or sign on to letters of support for public funding opportunities (see sub-section below for protocol)

*Requests will be evaluated by the Government Relations Community team and subject to approval by the Steering Committee or Executive Council
Issues raised with the Government Relations Community will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Is this issue relevant to the [Chicago Wilderness Alliance Green Vision Initiatives] Priorities and Principles?
2. How does this issue impact the ecological/public health and/or biodiversity of the Chicago Wilderness Alliance Region?

It is not always possible for the Alliance to take collective action on a current legislative issue. When collective action is not possible, the Government Relations Community will explore directing individuals to Alliance partners with related subject matter expertise.

Requesting Letters of Support for Public Funding Opportunities

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance has a long history of helping partner organizations with federal, state, local and philanthropic grants. Historically, this support has primarily come in the form of written Letters of Endorsement for the particular grant or project Chicago Wilderness Alliance partners are seeking. This support continues today!

If you are interested in receiving a letter of support and are a current Chicago Wilderness partner, please complete this [form] to request a letter of support for public funding opportunities. Please tell us how your proposed project fits within the [Green Vision Initiative framework].

Ideally, project descriptions should encompass multiple aspects of the Green Vision and its seven overlapping goal initiatives and teams. As above in the form, [Green Vision Initiatives] include [Managing Healthy Landscapes] and associated maps, [Agriculture] and associated maps, [Prioritizing Green Infrastructure], and associated maps, [Conserving Land for Biodiversity] and associated maps, [Increasing Equitable Access to Nature] and associated maps, [Taking Climate Action] and associated maps, and [Protecting Healthy Water] and associated maps. Kindly consider attaching template language for Alliance representatives to adapt to Alliance messaging style.

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