

Chicago Wilderness

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For Immediate Release

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance Executive Council is excited to name its new Steering Committee Members and Officers for 2019.

Elizabeth S. Kessler, Executive Director of McHenry County Conservation District, was sworn in as Chair of the Alliance for a three-year term, replacing Arnold Randall, General Superintendent of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, who is rotating off after serving in this capacity since 2012.

Elizabeth is honored and enthusiastic about the opportunity of sharing leadership of the Alliance at this pivotal moment, working with public and private partners to build momentum, cultivate organizational capacity and advance critical conservation work throughout the four-state region.

"Chicago Wilderness is a leader in regional conservation strategy and we envision a greener region where diverse voices stand united to create a lasting legacy for our children and future generations. Where parks, trails, natural areas, farms and backyards in urban, suburban and rural areas are preserved, protected and connected to ensure a healthy and sustainable future and a strong and vibrant economy for all," she says.

"The alliance is equipped, energized and poised for collective impact and will succeed in implementing our Green Vision of Chicago Wilderness because of our synergy and shared goals. I am very optimistic about our direction and ability to achieve our ambitious goals!" Kessler adds.

"I deeply appreciate Elizabeth's steadfast commitment to Chicago Wilderness and the positive influence she has had on its evolution. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to serve Chicago Wilderness," says outgoing Chair, Arnold Randall who will continue to stay involved and support the Forest Preserves' participation.

"Chicago Wilderness epitomizes collaborative conservation at a regional level. I believe that collaboration amplifies our impact and I am committed to ensuring Chicago Wilderness' continued success. In this regional alliance, connectedness matters, not only for healthy habitats, but also for healthy organizations and people," Randall says.

Elizabeth is also a past President of the National Recreation and Park Association, past Chairman of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association and Executive Officer of the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration.

Other new members of the Executive Council include Jim Jerozal, Director of Energy Efficiency Nicor Gas, who will assume the position of Vice-Chair; Lynn Boerman, Northern Illinois Coordinator - Region 2 of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, who steps in to the Treasurer position; and Danae Ehren, Field Project Manager of Tall Grass Restoration, who continues to serve as Executive Secretary.

Cathy Geraghty, Director of Strategic Initiatives of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, was elected to fill the vacant At-Large Steering Committee Member position for the next two years. She joins Alison Paul of the Field Museum, Daniel Suarez of Audubon Great Lakes, Kris Krouse of Shirley Heinz Land Trust and Jo-Elle Mogerman of Shedd Aquarium.

For more information, please contact Elizabeth S. Kessler at 815.338.6223 extension 1233 or visit www.chicagowilderness.org

About Chicago Wilderness Alliance

We are a regional alliance leading strategy to preserve, improve, and expand nature and quality of life. By connecting leaders in conservation, health, business, science, and beyond, we tackle challenging issues to ensure a resilient region. Building on a 20+ year legacy of collaboration, our broad alliance of member organizations advance work in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Chicago Wilderness envisions a region full of life; a region where people and nature thrive, directly benefiting each other. We are...diverse voices, green vision, and a united region. To learn more, please visit www.chicagowilderness.org

