

Chicago Wilderness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 24, 2019

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Chicago Wilderness Announces 2019 Dr. George B. Rabb Force of Nature Award Winners

On November 14, the Chicago Wilderness alliance will celebrate ten winners of the 2019 Dr. George B. Rabb Force of Nature awards at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, IL. Ranging from a high-level government official to the founder of a nonprofit who's only in high school, the recipients have made extraordinary contributions to regional conservation.

"These winners have distinguished themselves through creativity and sheer determination," said Elizabeth Kessler, Executive Director of the McHenry County Conservation District and Chair for Chicago Wilderness. "Their work touches everything from the birds over our heads to the wildflowers at our feet. They've contributed to a deeper understanding of our plant and wildlife communities, engaged overlooked groups to share in the benefits of nature, and improved our ability to plan with nature in mind."

Chicago Wilderness launched the Force of Nature awards in 2017 to highlight the incredible people working to make the Chicago area a greener place to live. "A lot of the folks working in this field don't trumpet their achievements," said Cherie LeBlanc Fisher of the US Forest Service, and Chicago Wilderness Force of Nature Awards Committee Chair. "But their work is vital, and people need to know about it."

"The problems we face — climate change, habitat and biodiversity loss, air and water pollution — require collective solutions, government action, and cross-border cooperation, as well as people doing whatever they can from wherever they are to support those measures," said Kessler. "We need catalysts for new projects and long-term stewards of the land. These award recipients show we can all make a profound difference."

Every two years, the public can nominate a person, organization, partnership, or project by filling out an application at chicagowilderness.org/page/GBRForceOfNature. The Force of Nature Awards Committee votes for the winners and presents awards at Chicago Wilderness' Partner Appreciation Event. Recently, the Chicago Wilderness Executive Council honored Dr. George Rabb for his long-lasting impact to conservation by dedicating the Force of Nature Awards to him. "Dr. Rabb will always be remembered as a force of nature," said Laura Reilly, Coordinator of Chicago Wilderness. "He was a champion of global conservation and the important work of Chicago Wilderness."

Chicago Wilderness is a regional alliance of more than 250 members including public land-owning agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, educational institutions, government agencies, businesses, and volunteer-based groups. We work collaboratively to build and implement a regional plan for preserving and restoring nature that improves environmental health, promotes quality of life, and benefits our vibrant communities.

To learn more, visit chicagowilderness.org. See next page for award recipients.

2019 Chicago Wilderness Dr. George B. Rabb Force of Nature Award Recipients

**Peter Gordan
Palos Hills, IL**

As a high school freshman, founded a nonprofit to promote habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

**Dave Miller
Richmond, IL**

Has conducted more than 600 bird surveys in McHenry County since 2005, providing critical guidance for land management.

**John Rogner
Elgin, IL**

Now deputy director of IDNR, helped create Chicago Wilderness and led the alliance through years of growth and achievement.

**David Sollenberger
Glencoe, IL**

Chicago Botanic Garden native plant guru, built the Dixon National Tallgrass Prairie Seed Bank.

**Valerie Spale
Westchester, IL**

When Wolf Road Prairie was in danger of development, she and others fought to save it.

**Cardno Native Plant Nursery
Walkerton, IN**

Developed extensive native plant catalog; donated many plants and seed to restorations.

**Cool Learning Experience
Waukegan, IL**

Environmental education program that encourages children to explore nature, identify problems, and find creative solutions.

**Conservation Corps
Cook County, IL**

Employs people from a range of backgrounds through paid internships restoring nature.

**Flora of the Chicago Region
Lombard, IL**

With rigorous scholarship and attention to detail, its scientist-authors revised and reinvented this vital botanical resource.

**On to 2050
Chicago, IL**

CMAAP reached 100,000 residents in shaping their regional plan; nature plays a pivotal role.

For more information on the recipients, visit chicagowilderness.org/page/GBRForceOfNature.

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