WHAT IS CHICAGO WILDERNESS?

Chicago Wilderness is a regional alliance of organizations working to protect the lands and waters on which we all depend. We represent:

10 million people

545,000 acres of protected lands and waters

1.4 million of potentially connected healthy acres

318 organizations

4 initiatives

1 goal: A future in which people and nature live to one another’s benefit, and a culture of sustainability prevails.

Chicago Wilderness takes action through four key initiatives, which reflect our commitment to combining science and emerging knowledge, and a collaborative approach to conservation, to benefit both people and nature:

• **Restoring Nature:** Members of Chicago Wilderness restore the health of the region’s natural areas and engage residents as stewards of our lands and waters.

• **Climate Action:** We develop strategies to conserve land, water, and wildlife in the face of a changing climate.

• **Leave No Child Inside:** We provide places and programs for generations of families to connect with nature.

• **Greening Infrastructure:** We are creating a 1.4 million-acre network of lands and waters that can be protected, restored, or connected to support the people and nature in our region for generations to come.
A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“My great surprise is that time enjoying Chicago Wilderness has changed my life.”

Liza Sullivan, Executive Director, Alliance for Early Childhood, and mother of twins

In her 2012 blog post Liza Sullivan, co-founder of ThroughPlay, wrote about the positive effects on her children of spending family time in the parks and preserves of Chicago Wilderness: her children were becoming healthier and more curious; their creativity, skills in assessing (small) risks, and love of nature were increasing by bounds.

Sullivan also noted the unexpected benefits that she and her family reaped: the ability to unwind in nature, to build a treasury of cherished memories, and to experience a sense of family continuity by engaging in activities she’d enjoyed as a child, with her own children and husband.

Through Chicago Wilderness, more than 300 organizations are working together to conserve the native biodiversity of our region. This is critical work in its own right, yet it’s also important to recognize the tremendous positive effects our alliance is having on the people who live here. In an urban area, where people can easily disconnect from the natural world, we are raising the quality of life for all the region’s residents (human and otherwise).

Through our Greening Infrastructure initiative, we are creating a regional network of natural areas that allow wildlife and plant life to flourish, while providing more recreational opportunities for people. And we are helping communities protect the natural resources on which they depend not only for recreation, but for clean air, clean water, and flood control.

Through our collective work to restore natural areas to health, to actively maintain them and make them more resilient to climate change, we are protecting those areas for the benefit of people today, and for future generations.

Through our efforts to reconnect people—especially today’s children and families of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds—to nature, we are helping the residents of this region become physically and emotionally healthier and fostering an appreciation of nature to ensure that the natural world we inherited will continue to be actively and thoughtfully cared for into the future.

Through our collective conservation action, we are delivering critical services to the people of this region.

Liza Sullivan says that her time in Chicago Wilderness has changed her life. There is no better testament to our shared conservation work than this: that we, in our work to conserve biodiversity, are also helping others recognize and celebrate their place in the landscape we are all working to protect.

Arnold Randall
General Superintendent of the Forest Preserves of Cook County and Chair, Chicago Wilderness

James J. Jerozal, Jr.
Managing Director, Energy Efficiency, Nicor Gas and Chair, Chicago Wilderness Corporate Council

Elizabeth S. Kessler
Executive Director of the McHenry County Conservation District and Vice Chair, Chicago Wilderness

Melinda Pruett-Jones
Executive Director, Chicago Wilderness
Chicago Wilderness spans parts of four states, 38 counties and 521 municipalities. Our alliance conserves the vast network of preserves and open spaces within this geopolitically diverse region by engaging a wide variety of stakeholders.

Originally, our membership consisted primarily of organizations whose main focus was conservation. Yet our shared mission resonated with so many diverse people and organizations that today our membership crosses all sectors: conservation organizations, local, state and federal government agencies, volunteer and faith-based groups, educational and cultural organizations, and corporations.

The corporate community holds a unique stake in ensuring that the Chicago region is a healthy, attractive place to live and work. To that end, the Chicago Wilderness Corporate Council engages the business community in regional conservation, bringing the significant resources and influence of that community to bear on our shared mission. Working with nonprofit, government, and community partners through Chicago Wilderness, the Corporate Council further diversifies and amplifies our efforts to conserve biodiversity, connect people and nature, and ensure a sustainable and high quality of life for all who live in this region.

“As a member of the Chicago Wilderness Corporate Council since its inception, WRD values the resources that the alliance provides. Our work through Chicago Wilderness helps promote vitality and improve the quality of life for our clients and their communities, while leveraging the relationships and capabilities of our members to build support for biodiversity conservation in our region.”

Geoff Deigan, President, WRD Environmental

The Chicago Wilderness Corporate Council celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2012. Pictured here are founding members, from left: James Jerozal, Jr., Nicor Gas and Chair of the Corporate Council; Jay Womack, WRD Environmental; Charlie Keppel, The Davey Tree Expert Company; Bill Leiter, UP America, Inc.; Todd Degner, The Davey Tree Expert Company; Anngie Richter, Cardno JFNew; Sara Race, ComEd; Bill Stoll, Applied Ecological Services; Jedd Anderson, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Inc.; Not pictured: David Bier, Futurity, Inc.

Many hands make light work. The Chicago Wilderness Corporate Council offers an annual Day of Service for employees, their families and friends to give back to nature at preserves and parks around the region. Each year, volunteers cut brush, collect seeds, mulch, build trails, and remove invasive plants. Pictured here, volunteers build new walking trails at Eden Place Nature Center In Chicago for the 2013 Chicago Wilderness Corporate Council Day of Service.
Chicago Wilderness’ vision for the growth and redevelopment of our region is an interconnected network of land and water that supports plants, wildlife, and people. A region guided by the best practices of green infrastructure. Today we have more than 545,000 acres of protected natural areas. The Green Infrastructure Vision is a roadmap for increasing that number to 1.4 million acres through careful and intentional land use decisions that ensure communities for people and wildlife are healthy, sustainable, and resilient.

Chicago Wilderness members recently refined the Vision in a dynamic GIS-based tool to guide planning efforts and inspire sound decision-making. The refined Vision, comprised of many layers of geospatial data and modeling tools, identifies protected natural areas, ecologically significant or sensitive areas that should be protected or buffered, and existing and potential corridors for wildlife use and recreational access. The Vision is freely available to alliance members and communities across the region thanks in part to funding from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation. Visit the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning website at [www.cmap.illinois.gov/green-infrastructure](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/green-infrastructure) to access the interactive Green Infrastructure Vision tool.

The map on this page shows the refined Green Infrastructure Vision of protected lands. The map is overlaid with priority areas that can be restored, protected, connected, or that need to be developed in an intentional, sustainable way.

Diverse Partnerships Key to Implementing the Chicago Wilderness Vision

Municipalities, government agencies, land owners, nonprofits, and businesses all play important roles in implementing the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision, because they all make or impact land use decisions that can support a healthy environment and high quality of life for people across the region.

With a common vision in place, decision makers and planners who may not normally work together can begin to work cooperatively. As Jason Berry, Planning & Building Commissioner at the City of Blue Island, explains: “The Green Infrastructure Vision process is at its best when neighboring municipalities and other local governments are talking to each other, often for the first time in years, about shared responsibility and stewardship. The Vision connects community to community - we realize water and our natural resources are a shared responsibility.”

The Vision serves as a common reference point for land-use and transportation planners, stormwater managers, and others and in this way supports integrated planning efforts across communities, making the most efficient use of financial and technological resources.
The Chicago Wilderness Sustainable Watershed Action Team (SWAT) is one way the Green Infrastructure Vision is implemented. SWAT provides customized technical assistance and works in partnership with communities to help them develop local plans, adopt protective ordinances, and implement sustainable development practices. SWAT has been supported by Grand Victoria Foundation, The Boeing Company, Chicago Community Trust, and US EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

During the past year many organizations were part of facilitating green infrastructure mapping and planning processes for communities across the region as shown in this map (below). Participating organizations include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Alliance for the Great Lakes, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, City of Blue Island, Conservation Design Forum, GeoSyntec Consultants, Delta Institute, The Field Museum, Hey and Associates, Inc., Kane County Department of Development and Community Services, McHenry County Department of Planning and Development, Northwest Municipal Conference, Olson Ecological Solutions, Sanitary District of Michigan City, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, Village of Riverside, Weaver Boos Consultants, The Wetlands Initiative, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

Chicago Wilderness helped create and now chairs the Metropolitan Greenspaces Alliance (MGA). The MGA is a national network of urban conservation coalitions whose members include over 550 private, nonprofit and public organizations from seven U.S. metropolitan regions that together are home to 30 million people. As the only such network in the United States, the MGA is a national leader in efforts to advance the goals of landscape-scale and urban conservation.

In addition, Chicago Wilderness members recently hosted a national conference on Large Landscape Conservation in Metropolitan America. Over 60 planners, conservation leaders, agency representatives and other leaders converged in Chicago in April 2013. Representing 14 different states and primarily urban areas, the participants examined how large landscape conservation is an increasingly effective approach to address metropolitan regions’ challenges. U.S. Representatives Mike Quigley (IL) and Earl Blumenauer (OR) also participated, sharing their perspectives on conservation in federal policy.

The Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision identifies a network of 1.4 million acres of land in the region that can be restored, protected, or connected through conservation and sustainable development practices. Sustainable Watershed Action Teams (SWAT) are innovative partnerships that deliver planning and customized technical assistance to help communities develop local plans, adopt protective ordinances, and implement sustainable development practices.

A National Approach

Our Green Infrastructure Vision is a powerful tool for the Chicago region. But we also have a tremendous opportunity—and have already begun to make a difference—on the national scene as we partner with other cities and federal agencies to shape the emerging era of landscape-scale conservation.

Completed Projects

- McHenry County Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan
  - Horizon American Planning Association - 2012 “Best Strategic Plan”
  - County Planning staff working with communities on GI plan leading
- Village of Barrington, Lincolnshire, Mettawa GI Plan
- City of Crystal Lake GI Plan
  - City staff mentre designing site-specific implementation plans
  - City comprehensive plan recognizes the value and potential benefits of green infrastructure
- Village of Campton Hills GI Plan
  - Comprehensive green plan includes GI mapping/planning as organizing principle
- City of Woodstock GI Plan
  - Comprehensive plan includes GI mapping/planning as organizing principle
- Village of Lakewood GI Plan
  - Planning for flood control applications
- Kane County GI Plan
  - Several GI mapping projects underway
- Kishwaukee Corridor GI Planning
  - Prioritized list of potential GI projects identified
  - Engagement with Economic Development organization underway
- McHenry Creek GI Plan
  - Elgin Bike Trail subarea in pilot project with GI mapping
- Oak remnant mapping shows target communities
  - Millennium Reserve 36 Community GI Planning
  - Michigan City/Trail Creek GI Planning
  - Des Plaines River Community GI Planning

Projects Coordinating with SWAT

- South Suburban Mayors and Managers site-based GI Projects
- IDNR/SWMIA Lukanet Cornish GI Planning
- Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission Cedar Lake GI Planning

Visit www.chicagowilderness.org/GIV for more information
Conservation professionals and volunteers have been working for decades to protect and restore our region’s astounding array of natural areas, which provide critical habitat for native plants and wildlife, including many threatened and endangered species. But in the last five years, a new species has risen to the top of the endangered list: children playing outside in nature.

Rachel Carson titled her seminal work, *Silent Spring*, after the decline of birds (and thus their songs) in the 1960s. In this country we are now experiencing silent summers: we don’t hear nearly as many children running and playing outside, climbing trees, catching frogs, building forts, or inventing thousands of other ways to play together in backyards, parks, or forest preserves. According to one study, 70 percent of American mothers of children three to 12 years old reported playing outdoors when they were young. In contrast, only thirty percent of their children do today.

The health benefits associated with outdoor play are well documented—it is associated with everything from lower blood pressure to better social and cognitive development.

To help our children reap these benefits, Chicago Wilderness hosts *Leave No Child Inside Month* each June, during which families can discover local nature and spend quality time outside at dozens of events that take place at nature centers, in neighborhood parks, and at other sites across the region. At these and other events throughout the year, children can learn to fish, search for critters, build forts, and enjoy a host of other activities.

The June 2013 Leave No Child Inside Month was a fantastic success:

In just one month, 15,000 children and families participated in Leave No Child Inside events with the help of 115 partners. Children fished, caught butterflies, and explored parks and preserves.

Watch an overview of 2013 kickoff event at Northerly Island. (Video produced by Amada Kopec.)
Building Teams, Building Explorers  
Waukegan LNCI Partnership Connects Latino Children to the Outdoors

Outdoor recreation is a part of many people’s way of life. But large groups of people are still underrepresented among nature program participants and public land users in our region.

In Waukegan and North Chicago, Illinois, where three out of five children are of Hispanic or Latino origin, Chicago Wilderness members are working with cultural heritage, youth development, and social service organizations in the community to find new ways to better connect Latino families to the outdoors. Organizations leading this collaborative effort include Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods, Lake County Forest Preserves, First Baptist Church of Waukegan, Waukegan Harbor Citizens Advisory Group, Chicago Botanic Garden, Waukegan Public Library and Park District, and others.

The group engaged a well-respected community leader, the community youth soccer league's coordinator, in developing and promoting nature-based team outings. As a result, in April 2013, more than 50 middle-school students active in Waukegan’s Puro Futbol Youth Soccer League participated in nature-based team-building exercises at Greenbelt Forest Preserve in North Chicago.

The collaborative effort characterizes the Waukegan Leave No Child Inside network’s strategy to go beyond traditional program delivery and promotion by engaging in a two-way conversation with the Latino community about program outcomes that are valuable to everyone. As the youth soccer league’s program coordinator put it, “This is an effort to give the children more than soccer – it’s an opportunity for them to discover and learn about nature.”

In January 2013, Chicago Wilderness hosted the inaugural Leave No Child Inside conference at Triton College in River Grove, Illinois. Approximately 170 environmental educators, teachers, faith and cultural representatives, landscape architects, and other professionals attended the conference, which provided a unique opportunity for leaders in these fields to share their knowledge and network with individuals and organizations who are dedicated to connecting children to nature.
Nature Play Areas Spreading through Chicago Wilderness
Areas Encourage Families to Get Hands-on with Nature

The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore’s newly unveiled Nature Play Zone at the Paul Douglas Center for Environmental Education allows children and caregivers to build sand forts and rock castles, climb trees, and use their imaginations to discover and play in nature in thousands of other ways.

The Nature Play Zone is part of a broader effort at Indiana Dunes to inspire families to connect with nature in their own backyards, community parks, and their neighborhood national park. “We want to change visitors’ hearts and minds from fear of the outdoors and apprehension to caring and appreciation,” said Kimberly Swift, Education Programs Manager at the National Park. “Our staff visited the nature play areas at other partner organizations and participated in the Nature Start training at Brookfield Zoo and Leave No Child Inside workshops all over the region.”

Our region’s national park is not the only agency to recently break ground on nature play areas. The Forest Preserve Districts of Cook and Will Counties and The Park District of Highland Park’s Heller Nature Center also recently opened exploration playgrounds around the region.

These play areas offer unique ways for kids to explore the outdoors in safe settings. The creative differences in how each nature play area was designed highlights the fundamental message of the Leave No Child Inside initiative: there are a lot of great ways to get outside in the Chicago Wilderness region!

“The seed for the Nature Play Zone was planted by all of you. This is our common goal: to leave no child inside wherever they are.”

Kimberly Swift, Education Programs Manager at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, on the value of collaboration in developing their Nature Play Zone

Ms. Swift welcomes visitors to the new play area at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

Get a glimpse of the Crabtree Nature Center’s new nature play area in this video. (Video produced by Amada Kopec.)
In an urban environment like the Chicago Wilderness region, where natural processes have been disrupted, land, water, plants, and wildlife must be actively managed using proven, science-based methods. Because so many Chicago Wilderness members dedicate their efforts to on-the-ground restoration projects at the site scale across the region, our collective work as an alliance focuses on the big picture efforts that will help everyone succeed. Because nature does not recognize county, state, or other geopolitical boundaries, the alliance identifies conservation priorities; develops and implements long-term conservation plans; and adds capacity for our collective work, all at a regional scale.

“The 10 million people of the Chicago Wilderness region are dependent on healthy nature for our most fundamental needs—clean air, clean water, food, and medicines, not to mention recreation, discovery, and spiritual renewal. Our region is rich with these resources, but will only remain so with persistent and energetic restoration action.”

*Jeff Mengler,* Co-Chair of the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision Task Force and the Chicago Wilderness Natural Resource Management Team
Restoring a Midwestern Icon
Chicago Wilderness Oak Recovery Project

The massive yet graceful architecture of ancient oaks, with specialized plants living at their base, epitomize the historical landscape of the Chicago Wilderness region. Oak woodlands provide critical food, water, and shelter for hundreds of birds, pollinating insects, and other wildlife that rely on these ecosystems. Chicago Wilderness scientists recently recognized that as existing oaks age, invasive plants in the understory make it hard for new generations of oaks to establish. In McHenry County, for example, total oak-dominated areas have shrunk by 87% in 172 years. The Chicago Wilderness Oak Mapping and Recovery Project is a collaborative effort to address these newly recognized urgent threats to our region’s oak ecosystems.

The Morton Arboretum and Chicago Wilderness received a grant from the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry to map the current and historic oak canopy in northeastern Illinois and devise a species recovery plan. Typically ecosystem and species recovery plans are developed and implemented by restoration professionals and volunteers. In this instance, because of the diverse partnerships within the Chicago Wilderness alliance, members recognized how the recovery plan could benefit by being incorporated into the regional Green Infrastructure Vision. Now, future planning efforts of municipalities can recognize and give special consideration to areas optimal for oak recovery. For example, SWAT-facilitated green infrastructure planning efforts for Kane County and the Millennium Reserve Calumet Core have incorporated data from the oak mapping project.

Resident education and engagement is an important component of the Oak Mapping and Recovery Project. Using the backyard-based Conservation@Home program (developed by The Conservation Foundation), The Conservation Foundation, Conserve Lake County, and Barrington Area Conservation Trust have delivered over 200 presentations and visited 127 properties since Fall 2012. They encourage property owners to plant oaks, educate about the importance of oak woodlands, and advise on oak species most suitable for particular site conditions.

Cyndi Duda, Sustainable Landscapes Coordinator with Conserve Lake County, prepares oak seedlings for free distribution to private landowners as part of efforts to bolster the region’s iconic and imperiled oak ecosystems.
“Beyond promoting excellence in restoring the ecological health of a site, the Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program raises awareness of the outstanding work of the agencies and organizations throughout the region that are responsible for caring for public lands, and the need for consistent resources for them to carry out this critical work.”

Elizabeth Kessler, Executive Director of the McHenry County Conservation District

Promoting Best Practices
Chicago Wilderness Launches Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program

As pioneers of the landscape-scale approach to conservation, Chicago Wilderness members have been on the frontline of creative, impactful restoration work. So it comes as no surprise that, when it comes to restoration in the Chicago Wilderness region, we have a lot to be proud of. Designed to celebrate those successes, Chicago Wilderness’ Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program recognizes outstanding impact in on-the-ground restoration work.

Chicago Wilderness now accredits, celebrates, and raises the credibility of high-quality, restored natural areas and the organizations that manage them. Based on principles outlined in the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan, the program uses professional standards of excellence in natural resource management and ecological restoration. These standards are available for adaptation and adoption by other organizations at www.chicagowilderness.org/eerp.

Open to entities from the public, nonprofit, and private sectors, the first seven 2013 recipients received their accreditation at a region-wide benefit called Celebrating Nature in November 2013. Chicago Wilderness is grateful to ArcelorMittal, the 2013 sponsor of the program and the Celebrating Nature event.

The 2014 application process for Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze accreditation is now open. Visit www.chicagowilderness.org/eerp for information on how to apply.
Celebrating Communities and Volunteers: The Conservation and Native Landscaping Awards

The Conservation and Native Landscaping Awards, a joint program of Chicago Wilderness and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, recognize community projects that involve the exemplary use of native landscaping, ecosystem protection, and conservation design. These practices create and protect habitat for a variety of native plant and animal species and result in important environmental benefits for both people and nature.

“This recognition means two important things for this project,” said 2012 winner Village of Niles Assistant Village Manager Steven Vinezeano in an article in the Niles Bugle in November 2012. “First and foremost, it is a big pat-on-the-back for all those community volunteers and sponsors who believed in the project and its message. Second, it establishes the Niles Community Rain Garden as a legitimate and sound environmental/stormwater case study for all of us to learn from and enjoy.”

Over the past two years, LaPorte County Parks worked to demolish a failing dam from the 1830s in Red Mill Park, LaPorte County, Indiana. The organization then replanted the area with native vegetation. The project preserved and restored over 120 acres of the Little Calumet River and received a 2012 Conservation and Native Landscaping Award.

The Chicago Botanic Garden’s North Lake Shoreline Restoration Project, a recipient of the 2013 Conservation and Native Landscaping Award.
Managing Invasive Plants with Nontraditional Partners

The Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership (NIIPP) is a cooperative weed management area—a regional organization that brings together interested landowners, land managers, nonprofits, private entities, industry, special districts, and the public to effectively manage invasive plant species across jurisdictional boundaries. Established in 2010 with the support of Chicago Wilderness, NIIPP—now with 49 partners—has distributed more than $26,000 for on-the-ground invasive plant control projects.

Part of NIIPP’s strength comes from its ability to work with partners outside the field of conservation, such as the Illinois Department of Transportation District 1, Lake County Health Department, and Union Pacific Railroad. As Rick Wanner, Landscape Architect with the Illinois Department of Transportation explains, “IDOT Region 1 has been an enthusiastic member of NIIPP from the beginning. We take our responsibility to prevent invasive weeds from spreading along our roadways seriously. The knowledge we have gained and the contacts for coordinated control efforts we have made by participating in NIIPP have greatly improved our weed control program.”

Controlled Burns Benefit Nature

Controlled burns are a critical restoration tool in the Chicago Wilderness region. Many native plants are dependent on fire to reproduce, and controlled burns also remove invasive and dense underbrush, allowing native plants and trees to thrive. To help agencies conduct these burns safely, Chicago Wilderness members developed a specialized training course specific to using controlled fire in Midwestern ecosystems. To further ensure public safety, Chicago Wilderness members most recently developed a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan for the six county region surrounding Chicago, including Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties. Funded by a grant from the USDA Forest Service, the plan identifies areas where wildfire prevention efforts should be focused, based on three factors—risk of wildfire occurrence, the type and amount of vegetation available to fuel wildfires, and the potential for damage to human communities. The plan thus provides a framework for land management agencies and fire departments to work cooperatively to both prevent wildfires and make informed decisions regarding vegetation management on both public and private lands.

A controlled burn is conducted in Bemis Woods, Cook County, Illinois. Controlled burns clear away low, thick brush so native trees and wildflowers can establish in the newly opened areas.
Chicago Wilderness’ Climate Action initiative represents the efforts of Chicago Wilderness members that share resources and expertise to guide our region through the complexities of conservation in a changing climate. Just as all things in nature are connected, the coordinated, strategic actions we take through Chicago Wilderness’ other initiatives also advance our climate action goals. By restoring the health of the region’s natural areas and engaging residents and children in the natural world, Chicago Wilderness members are making our lands and waters, and the plant and animal communities they hold, more resilient in the face of a changing climate.

Climate Considerations

In 2012, a collaborative team produced a Climate Change Update to the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan; a roadmap for natural area conservation and restoration from a climate change perspective. The Climate Change Update to the Biodiversity Recovery Plan focuses on large natural areas, like wetlands and prairies in less urbanized areas.

The success of this update led a collaborative team of Chicago Wilderness members and partners including the City of Chicago, The Nature Conservancy, The Field Museum, and the University of Notre Dame to apply the principles outlined in an urban context, focusing on climate adaptations for biodiversity in a highly urbanized environment.

Together the partners developed Climate Considerations for Management of Natural Areas and Green Spaces in the City of Chicago, an incredible and ground-breaking resource for the Chicago Wilderness region.

The guide is designed to help resource managers identify options to reduce the exposure of key species or systems to change, reduce their sensitivity to change, or increase their ability to adapt to change. Ultimately, it will enable managers to develop adaptation strategies that help ensure natural systems can remain viable as changes continue at an ever-increasing rate, while maintaining systems that will work under current conditions. To those ends, the Climate Considerations guide provides a list of probing questions, and resources to help managers find answers to those questions.

The guide’s recommendations are being piloted at six diverse areas around the Chicago Wilderness region to gauge the guide’s usefulness across a spectrum of possible needs:

- The Field Museum
- 31st Street property owned by the Chicago Park District
- Eggers Woods property owned by the Forest Preserves of Cook County
- Loyola University Chicago Campus
- Loyola University Ecology Retreat Center (McHenry County)
- Indian Boundary Prairie restoration site owned by The Nature Conservancy

The pilot participants are using the guidebook to assess their sites and will report back with descriptions of current management and recommendations for climate adaptations, and share lessons they learned from the experience. “The Climate Considerations guide will advance efforts to make our lands and waters more resilient to the effects of climate change and develop the conservation leaders of tomorrow,” said Aaron N. Durnbaugh, Director of Sustainability at Loyola University Chicago. “The guide builds on the recommendations of the Chicago Wilderness Climate Action Plan for Nature by helping urban land owners and managers address climate change and document their experiences so that others can apply that emerging knowledge. Loyola University is proud to be part of this ongoing effort to prepare our extraordinary students to reduce the future impacts of climate change on our region.”

The project partners believe the guide can eventually be scaled up to help other Great Lakes urban areas address climate change needs. This forward-thinking demonstrates the important role Chicago Wilderness plays in advancing urban conservation for our region and beyond.
Linking Climate Research to Management

Scientists are conducting ground-breaking research, while natural resource managers are breaking ground in creative ways to protect and restore natural areas. Together, these two groups play a large role in the future of our region.

In November 2012, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Science Conference sought to bring these two key groups together for a day of discussion and discovery. The conference highlighted previous, ongoing, and future research on aquatic ecosystems, biodiversity, invasive species, and restoration ecology associated with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and adjacent lands. A key objective of the conference was to communicate how the research can help inform decision-making on best management practices for the region.

Organized and hosted by the National Park Service and planned by Indiana University Northwest, United States Geological Survey, The Field Museum, and researchers and land managers from around the region, the conference provided an important venue for practitioners to share ideas. The event’s planners hope that such symposia will lead to a national approach for more effective engagement between these two key groups in the field.

The Chicago Wilderness Climate Action Taskforce recently hosted five climate clinics for 200 participants. These clinics have been tailored for natural resource managers, members of the business community, and educators, and focus on the local issues and impacts associated with global climate change.

During the past year the Chicago Wilderness Climate Action Taskforce hosted or participated in 25 workshops, webinars, and conferences locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, cementing the alliance’s role in advancing climate action in urban areas. In addition, the Task Force is contributing chapters to the Handbook of Climate Change Mitigation and a project coordinated by the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science.
Thanks go to the organizations, foundations, and individuals that supported the efforts of Chicago Wilderness and its members through financial contributions and in-kind support.

The Chicago Wilderness Alliance
Revenues to the Chicago Wilderness Trust

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How the Alliance Invested its Revenue During the 2012 – 2013 Fiscal Year

Chicago Wilderness operates efficiently, leveraging the capacity of our member organizations. This year, 86% of our expenses went directly into the collaborative projects and programs of the alliance.

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DONORS

Corporations, Foundations, Organizations and Government Agencies
Alliance for the Great Lakes
ArcelorMittal
Atrium
Barrington Area Conservation Trust, Inc.
Bobolink Foundation
Boeing Corporation
BP America, Inc.
Cardno JFNew
Chicago Area Combined Federal Campaign
Chicago Botanic Garden
Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.
Comcast Foundation
Exelon Corporation
The Field Museum
First Congregational Church of Wilmette
Forest Preserves of Cook County
Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
Geosyntec Consultants
Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc.
Hamill Family Foundation
Harold M. and Adeline S. Morrison Family Foundation
Illinois Conservation Foundation
Intel Foundation
Liberty Prairie Foundation
MB Real Estate Services, Inc.
McCance Foundation Trust
Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
Midwest Groundcovers, LLC
Nicor Gas
North Shore Unitarian Church
Openlands
Public Communications, Inc.
Recreational Equipment, Inc.
Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust
Tallgrass Restoration, LLC
The Outdoor Foundation
University of Chicago
University of Illinois at Chicago
US Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA Forest Service
V3 Companies
Weaver Boos Consultants

Individuals
Biodiversity Guild
Deborah Lahey
Dr. George Rabb
Louis F. Schauer

Conservation Circle
Edwards Lyons and Jean Sussman
Martha and Zink Sanders

Habitat Club
Benjamin Brown and Alison Carney Brown
Tom Beck
Lisa Bronson
Ketaki Chavre
Peter Chen
Andrea Cross
Dale Engquist
Carol and Conrad Fialkowski
Russell Game
John and Michelle Gillett

Friends of Chicago Wilderness
Nicole Cavender
Robert Chambers
Scott Preece

Peter Layton
Allison Margolies
Gregory Mueller
Stephen and Melinda Pruett-Jones
Arnold Randall
Dorr St. Clair
James Stuhlmacber
Nancy Wallace and David Shiner
Michael Zarski
Chicago Wilderness implemented the following projects during its 2012–13 fiscal year.

## Greening Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Project Partners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assisting Communities with Green Infrastructure Planning Using the Sustainable Watershed Action Team (SWAT) Model: City of Woodstock (IL), Des Plaines River Watershed (IL), Kane County (IL), Kishwaukee River Corridor (IL), McHenry County (IL), Midlothian Creek Watershed (IL), Millennium Reserve Calumet Core (IL), Michigan City/Trail Creek Watershed (IN), Village of Bannockburn (IL), Village of Campton Hills (IL), Village of Lincolnshire (IL), Village of Mettawa (IL), Village of Lakewood (IL)</td>
<td>Alliance for the Great Lakes; Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; City of Blue Island; City of Woodstock; Conservation Design Forum; Cowhey Gudmundson Leder, Ltd.; Environmental Defenders of McHenry County; Delta Institute; Environmental Planning Solutions, Inc.; The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Geosyntec Consultants, Inc.; Hey and Associates, Inc.; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Illinois Nature Preserves Commission; Kane County Development and Community Services Department; Kane County Planning Cooperative; Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership; Lake County Stormwater Management Commission; The Land Conservancy of McHenry County; JR, LLC; McHenry County Conservation District; McHenry County Department of Planning and Development; The Morton Arboretum; Natural Lands Institute; Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership; Northwest Municipal Conference; Olson Ecological Solutions, LLC; Openlands; Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Sanitary District of Michigan City; South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Village of Bannockburn; Village of Campton Hills; Village of Cherry Valley; Village of Lakewood; Village of Lincolnshire; Village of Mettawa; Village of New Milford; Village of Riverside; Weaver Boos Consultants; The Wetlands Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launching a Prototype of the Chicago Wilderness Knowledge Base: A Web-Accessible Data Management System to Support Implementation of the Green Infrastructure Vision</td>
<td>Chicago Botanic Garden; The Field Museum; Futurity, Inc.; Hey and Associates, Inc.; Illinois Department of Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring the Development of an Urban Long Term Research Area (ULTRA) for the Chicago Wilderness Region: Connecting the Social and Ecological Sciences with Planners, Managers, and the Public</td>
<td>DePaul University; The Field Museum; Lincoln Park Zoo; Loyola University; Purdue University; University of Illinois at Chicago; USDA Forest Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing the US Environmental Protection Agency and Chicago Wilderness Conservation &amp; Native Landscaping Awards Program</td>
<td>Burns &amp; McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc.; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc.; Naperville Park District; Shirley Heinze Land Trust; The Conservation Foundation; Sarah Abu-Abassi (consultant); The Field Museum; University of Chicago; DePaul University; V3; Weaver Boos Consultants; Land Conservancy of Will County</td>
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<td>Refining the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision</td>
<td>Applied Ecological Services (AES); Cardno ENTRIX, Inc.; Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; City of Chicago; The Conservation Foundation; The Conservation Fund; The Field Museum; Hey and Associates, Inc.; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Illinois Nature Preserves Commission; Lake County Forest Preserves; US Army Corps of Engineers</td>
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## Leave No Child Inside

- **Overcoming Barriers to Connecting Children of Color with Nature:** Piloting the Chicago Wilderness Nature Navigator Program in Waukegan and North Chicago, and
- **Puente a la Naturaleza: Mobilizing Waukegan’s Latino Families to Leave No Child Inside**

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<th>Project</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mighty Acorns: A Regional Conservation Stewardship Education Program</td>
<td>Bensenville Park District; Chicago Park District; The Conservation Foundation; Dunes Learning Center; Elgin High School; The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Forest Preserve District of DuPage County; Forest Preserve District of Kane County; Friends of the Forest Preserves; Girl Scouts of Chicago; Girl Scouts of Fox Valley; Girl Scouts of Rock River Valley; Iron Oaks Environmental Learning Center; Kane/DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District; Lake County Forest Preserves; Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation; McHenry County Conservation District; Northbrook Park District; Prairie Club Conservation Fund; Springbrook Nature Center; Spring Valley Nature Center; USDA Forest Service - Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie; USDA National Park Service/Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Next Generation of Conservation Leaders</td>
<td>Alliance for the Great Lakes; Associated Colleges of Illinois; Chicago Academy of Sciences and its Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum; Chicago Botanic Garden; Chicago Park District; Chicago Public Schools; Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo; DePaul University; Dunes Learning Center; The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Friends of the Forest Preserves; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; Lake County Forest Preserves; Loyola University; USDA National Park Service/Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore</td>
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<td>Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leave No Child Inside Conference: From Research to Practice</td>
<td>Triton College; Chicago Park District; Hitchcock Design Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playdate with Nature: A Leave No Child Inside Workshop for Educators</td>
<td>Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo; Forest Preserves of Cook County (lead); Greater Barrington Area Leave No Child Inside Partnership; Lake County Forest Preserves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature Play at the Dunes: A Leave No Child Inside Workshop</td>
<td>Discovery Charter School; Dunes Learning Center; Field Station Preschool; USDA National Park Service/Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (lead)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Barrington Area Leave No Child Inside Partnership</td>
<td>Citizens for Conservation and Barrington-area community partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaging Students in the Chicago Wilderness Congress</td>
<td>Chicago Botanic Garden; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Metropolitan Water Reclamation District; The Field Museum; Trust for Public Land</td>
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**Restoring Nature**

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<tr>
<td>Advancing the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership</td>
<td>Cardno ENTRIX, Inc.; Chicago Botanic Garden; The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Hey and Associates, Inc.; Lake County Forest Preserves; Lake County Health Department; The Morton Arboretum; Park District of Highland Park; USDA Forest Service - Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessing the Oak Resources of Northeast Illinois and Implementing a</td>
<td>Barrington Area Conservation Trust; Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership; Cardno ENTRIX, Inc.; Citizens for Conservation; The Conservation Foundation; Conserve Lake County; The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Forest Preserve District of DuPage County; Forest Preserve District of Kane County; Forest Preserve District of Will County; Hey and Associates, Inc.; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Illinois Nature Preserves Commission; Kendall County Forest Preserve District; Lake County Forest Preserves; The Land Conservancy of McHenry County; McHenry County Conservation District; Openlands; The Morton Arboretum; USDA Forest Service</td>
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<td>Cooperative Strategy to Restore Oak Dominance to the Region’s Tree</td>
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<td>Canopy</td>
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<td>Chicago Wilderness Land Management Research Program: 100 Sites for 100</td>
<td>Center for Humans and Nature; Chicago Botanic Garden; DePaul University; The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Forest Preserve District of DuPage County; Lake County Forest Preserves; McHenry County Conservation District; University of Illinois at Chicago</td>
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<td>Years</td>
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<td>A Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan for the Chicago Wilderness</td>
<td>Beach Park Fire Department; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Forest Preserve District of DuPage County; Forest Preserve District of Kane County; Forest Preserve District of Will County; Futurity, Inc.; Grayslake Fire Department; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Illinois Fire Service Institute; Illinois Nature Preserves Commission; Lake County Forest Preserves; Lake and McHenry County Wildland Fire Task Force; McHenry County Conservation District; The Nature Conservancy – Illinois; Pleasant Prairie Fire and Rescue; USDA Forest Service; USDA National Park Service/Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore; Wildfire Management &amp; Training Specialists; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources</td>
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<td>Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Launching the Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration</td>
<td>The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Forest Preserve District of DuPage County; Forest Preserve District of Kane County; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Lake County Forest Preserves; McHenry County Conservation District; The Nature Conservancy – Illinois; US Environmental Protection Agency Region 5</td>
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<td>Program</td>
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<td>Developing a Regional Strategy for Grassland Bird Conservation</td>
<td>Audubon-Chicago Region; Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.; The Field Museum; Forest Preserve District of Kane County; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Illinois Natural History Survey; Lake County Forest Preserves; The Nature Conservancy – Indiana; US Army Corps of Engineers; US Fish and Wildlife Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midwest Ecological Prescription Burn Crew Member Training Program</td>
<td>Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Forest Preserve District of DuPage County; The Morton Arboretum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnering with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to</td>
<td>Alliance for the Great Lakes; Bluestern Communications; Environmental Consulting &amp; Technology, Inc.; Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Northwater Consulting</td>
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<td>Develop an Illinois Lake Michigan Implementation Plan for the Illinois</td>
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<td>Coastal Area</td>
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<td>RESTORE (Rethinking Ecological &amp; Social Trends of Restoration Ecology):</td>
<td>DePaul University; The Field Museum; Loyola University; University of Illinois at Chicago; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; USDA Forest Service</td>
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<td>Evaluating the Biodiversity and Social Outcomes of Different Models of</td>
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<td>Restoration Planning in the Chicago Wilderness</td>
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<td>Restoration of Dokum Mskoda Nature Preserve: A Site of Regional</td>
<td>Fields of Cambridge Homeowners Association; Illinois Nature Preserves Commission; Conserve Lake County; US Fish and Wildlife Service</td>
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<td>Significance in Chicago Wilderness</td>
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## Climate Action

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<th>Project</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assessing the Updated Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision Using US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service Data on the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly</td>
<td>The Field Museum; US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago Wilderness Climate Clinics for Natural Resource Managers, the Business Community, and Environmental Educators</td>
<td>animalia project; Chicago Academy of Sciences and its Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum; Chicago Botanic Garden; Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo; Dunes Learning Center; The Field Museum; National Parks Conservation Association; USDI National Park Service/Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate Considerations for Management of Natural Areas and Green Spaces in the City of Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago Botanic Garden; Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Chicago Park District; Chicago Transit Authority; Chicago Transit Partners; City of Chicago Department of Streets &amp; Sanitation, Bureau of Forestry; City of Chicago Department of Transportation; The Field Museum; Forest Preserves of Cook County; Global Philanthropy Partnership; Loyola University; Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago; The Nature Conservancy; Openlands; Public Building Commission of Chicago; University of Notre Dame; WRD Environmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a Book Chapter for the International Handbook for Adaptation Documenting the Climate Work of Chicago Wilderness</td>
<td>The Field Museum; The Nature Conservancy; University of Notre Dame</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a Book Chapter for a Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science Publication on Climate Adaptation Strategies for Urban Forests</td>
<td>Chicago Botanic Garden; Chicago Park District; City of Chicago Department of Streets &amp; Sanitation, Bureau of Forestry; The Field Museum; Loyola University; The Morton Arboretum; Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science; US Department of Energy Argonne National Laboratory; USDA Forest Service; USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service</td>
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- **Forest Preserve District of Will County**
  - Marcy DeMauro, Ralph Schultz

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  - Margaret Frisbie, John Quail

- **Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods**
  - Sophia Twichell

- **Illinois Department of Natural Resources**
  - Lynn Boerman, Jim Herkert, Nancy Williamson

- **Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board**
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- **Illinois Natural History Survey**
  - Brian Anderson, Geoff Levin

- **Illinois Nature Preserves Commission**
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- **Northwestern University Environmental Policy & Culture Program**
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  - David Wise, Joel Brown

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  - Lynne Whelan

- **US Department of Energy, Argonne National Laboratory**
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- **US Fish and Wildlife Service**
  - Louise Clemency, Shawn Citron, Kris Lah, John Rogner

- **USDA Forest Service**
  - Barbara Tormoehlen, Tom Dilley, Lynne Westphal, Wade Spang

- **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**
  - Rand Briggs, Don McCollon

- **USDI National Park Service/Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore**
  - Costa Dillon, Kimberly Swift, Garry Traynham

- **Village of Lincolnshire**
  - Jennifer Hughes

- **Waukegan Citizen’s Advisory Group**
  - Susie Schreiber, Sharon Thieszen

- **The Wetlands Initiative**
  - Paul Botts

- **Honorary Member**
  - George Rabb, President Emeritus, Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo
# CHICAGO WILDERNESS MEMBERS

As of September 2013

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<th>AddATree</th>
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<td>Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory at Southern Illinois University Carbondale</td>
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Chicago Botanic Garden
Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
The Nature Conservancy – Illinois
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Today we determine the legacy we will leave for future generations. The Chicago Wilderness alliance coordinates the collective efforts of more than 300 nonprofit and corporate organizations to maintain and promote ecosystem health.

Join our efforts as we continue to define what it means to live in Chicago Wilderness.

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