

# Chicago Wilderness

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## Chicago Wilderness Recognizes Conservation Excellence and Force of Nature Recipients

Chicago Wilderness alliance celebrated the achievements of five organizations and ten individuals and agencies doing outstanding work to restore natural areas to benefit both people and nature in the Chicagoland region during a special reception held July 27<sup>th</sup> at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

From vast, rolling prairies and woodlands to outdoor classrooms, the accreditation and awards showcase the region's best examples of places that benefit both wildlife and people. **The Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration Accreditation** program recognizes large, high-quality natural areas and the organizations that manage them. Platinum and Gold Level recipients for restoration and biodiversity recovery work through adaptive management include:

The **Grant Creek Prairie** (Illinois Department of Natural Resources) – Platinum Accreditation

**Lake in the Hills Fen** (McHenry County Conservation District, the Village of Lake in the Hills and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources) – Platinum Accreditation

**Lockport Prairie East** (Forest Preserve District of Will County and the Lockport Township Park District) – Gold Accreditation

**MacArthur Woods** (Lake County Forest Preserves) – Platinum Accreditation

**Shoe Factory Road Prairie** (Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards) – Platinum Accreditation

In addition, ten outstanding individuals/agencies were recognized with **The Force of Nature Award** for their efforts in conservation, restoration, advocacy, and/or educational activities that are inspirational examples for others. These inspiring role models include:

**Amaris Alanis-Ribeiro** (Chicago Botanic Garden)

**Bill Glass** (USDA Forest Service, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie)

**Dr. Agnes Wojnarski** (Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission)

**Metropolitan Mayors Caucus** (Greenest Region Compact 2)

**Faith in Place** (Migration & Me Program)

**Friends of the Chicago River** (Turtle Habitat Restoration Project)

**Elgin High School** (National Biodiversity Teach-In)

**ArcelorMittal Research and Development Center** (Campus Restoration Project)

**Village of Green Oaks Volunteer Stewards** (Dennis Dorsey Conservation Area)

**Forest Preserve District of DuPage County** (The Preserve at Oak Meadows)

“The natural areas of Chicago’s wilderness are home to a wide diversity of species and rare habitats that provide opportunities for recreation and exploration, as well as clean air and water, flood protection and so much more. Yet the region’s natural areas are threatened by fragmentation; invasive plant and animal species; pollution; and the impacts of climate change. The Excellence in Ecological Restoration and Force of Nature award recipients are addressing these threats through their continued conservation work,” said Elizabeth S. Kessler, McHenry County Conservation District Executive Director and Vice-Chair, Chicago Wilderness.

“The Chicago Wilderness alliance is excited to celebrate these sites and the conservation leadership of the organizations that manage them,” said Arnold Randall, Forest Preserves of Cook County and Chair, Chicago Wilderness. “They are ensuring that our region’s natural resources survive and flourish for generations to come.”

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### **Chicago Wilderness**

Chicago Wilderness is a regional alliance that connects people and nature. More than 300 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 initiatives of Chicago Wilderness reflect the alliance’s commitment to using science and emerging knowledge, as well as a collaborative approach to conservation, to benefit all of the region’s residents. For more information, visit [www.chicagowilderness.org](http://www.chicagowilderness.org).