



The Chicago Park District's Outdoor and Environmental Education Program envisions a utilization of our parks as natural environments cared for in an environmentally responsible way to increase the use of outdoor space and develop awareness, appreciation, knowledge and stewardship of these natural resources.

www.chicagoparkdistrict.com

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Chicago Park District

Timothy J. Mitchell,

General Superintendent & CEO



www.chicagowilderness.org

The Chicago Park District is a member of Chicago Wilderness, a partnership of more than 200 Chicago area organizations that have joined forces to protect, restore, and manage natural lands.



www.kidsoutside.info

The Chicago Park District proudly supports the Leave No Child Inside initiative.

Letter from the Superintendent

Recently, the Chicago Park District designated approximately 40 nature areas throughout the city as Bird and Butterfly Sanctuaries. The designation emphasizes the importance of these areas and how crucial they are for wildlife and the health of ecosystems. From Bobolink Meadow in Jackson Park to Humboldt Lagoon to Montrose Point, such unique habitats house a great variety of native plants that provide food and shelter for a wide range of wildlife.

The Bird and Butterfly Sanctuaries offer safety and resources for the incredible numbers of migrating birds that pass through the City of Chicago each season, acting as a critical rest stop during a lengthy journey. These unique areas supply refuge for not only our fine-feathered friends, but also for the smaller winged creatures such as butterflies and dragonflies.

The Great Lakes region is a rich habitat and migration route for nearly 400 different bird species. Close to five million birds travel north to their breeding grounds or south to their wintering grounds stopping for food, water, shelter and rest at one of the Chicago Park District's Bird and Butterfly Sanctuaries during the journey.

The National Audubon Society recently designated Chicago's lakefront as an Important Birding Area because it is situated along a major migratory flyway. Because of its key geographical location, Chicago is able to provide these long distance travelers a wide range of habitats that include dunes, prairies, woodlands, wetlands and savannas. Soon, North Park Village Nature Center will receive this designation of an Important Birding Area.

As bird watching becomes increasingly popular among all ages in Chicago, the Park District offers many opportunities for nature lovers in the city to learn more about this pastime and even see some unique birds and butterflies through walks, programs and events.

The Park District understands the importance of these habitats and is continuously working to preserve the natural areas that are located in the middle of a busy, urban environment. Protection and preservation of Chicago's Bird and Butterfly Sanctuaries promotes native biodiversity while providing a wide range of food sources, shelter, and vegetation. Improved habitats not only increase the number of birds that visit, but the variety of species as well. An increase in native biodiversity is the best way to measure the success of land management practices in a nature area.

Our nature areas are a special treasure. Many volunteers dedicate their time and energy to protect these valuable resources. We commend them for their dedication.

We invite you to explore one of the many Bird and Butterfly Sanctuaries located throughout Chicago. To find one near you, go to our website at www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or call (312) 742-PLAY.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Mitchell".

Timothy J. Mitchell

General Superintendent & CEO, Chicago Park District

