

WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

Press Release

Chicago Wilderness Recognizes the Waukegan Park District for Conservation Achievements

Waukegan Park District one of 13 sites honored in the Chicago region

Waukegan, IL (**December 15, 2014**)—On December 11, the Chicago Wilderness alliance honored the Waukegan Park District with the **Conservation and Native Landscaping Award**.

From great woodlands to outdoor classrooms, the Chicago Wilderness Conservation and Native Landscaping Award recognizes sites within the greater Chicago region that demonstrate excellence in site-based restoration, native landscaping, 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.

The Waukegan Park District received the award for habitat restoration in Bowen Park's Glen Flora Ravine. Waukegan Park District President Terry Duffy stated, "The Waukegan Park District is fortunate to have such a great partner, the Waukegan Harbor Citizen's Advisory Group, in the Bowen Park ravine restoration project. This award wouldn't be possible without their significant contributions. The District's restoration efforts will enable future generations to enjoy the ravine's beautiful natural areas, special plants and animals. Ravine restoration also supports an important ecological purpose, purifying water as it travels to Lake Michigan. Receiving this recognition is like icing on the cake, thank you Chicago Wilderness!"

The natural areas of Chicago's wilderness are home to a wide diversity of species and rare habitats, and provide the region's residents with 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. To address these threats, through the restoration of the Glen Flora Ravine, the Waukegan Park District is demonstrating a commitment to maintain the health of local nature to benefit both people and wildlife.

"The Chicago Wilderness alliance is so pleased to recognize Waukegan Park District," said **Suzanne Malec-McKenna, Executive Director of Chicago Wilderness**. "They are helping to ensure that our region's natural heritage remains vibrant for generations to come."

About the Waukegan Park District

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 48 sites and more than 735 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the district include the Field House Sports and Fitness Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, an outdoor swimming pool, disc golf course, dog exercise area, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports courts including basketball and tennis. A full range of programs and services are offered year round for all ages, from infants to seniors as well as special needs populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, the Bowen Park Theatre Company, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The award-winning District employs 59 full-time and over 250 part-time, year round, seasonal, and temporary employees. The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The district maintains national accreditation from the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), the Illinois Association of Park District (IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and sustains a Level A Loss Control Program. The district was a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012 and 2013, and awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013.

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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.

www.chicagowilderness.org.

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