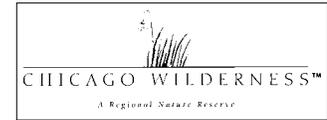


Chicago Wilderness

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry

Bringing Forestry to People Through Collaborative Stewardship



Description: The Chicago region – stretching from southeastern Wisconsin, through northeastern Illinois and into northwestern Indiana – is one of a just a handful of metropolitan areas in the world with a high concentration of globally significant natural communities. This region holds some of the best surviving remnants of the central Midwest’s native ecosystems – their prairies, woodlands, grasslands, and wetlands. The natural communities of this region, which include 250,000 acres of protected lands, are referred to as Chicago Wilderness.

Chicago Wilderness is also the name of the coalition working to protect these natural areas. The USDA Forest Service is one of more than 172 public and private organizations that have joined forces in an unprecedented alliance dedicated to protecting and restoring the region’s natural heritage.

Key Issues:

- Involve citizens, organizations, agencies, and corporations in conserving biodiversity.
- Strengthen the scientific basis for midwestern ecosystem management.
- Restore, manage, and protect globally and regionally important natural communities.

Accomplishments:

Urban Forestry Projects – Since its launch in April of 1996, Chicago Wilderness has helped fund more than 200 collaborative projects across Illinois and Indiana. Many programs, such as ABC (Asset Based Community Development, Volunteer Biodiversity Communication Training, and the Chicago Wilderness Training Hub, have increased awareness, support, and coordination, among the educational community for recovery of the region’s biodiversity. For more information, visit on-line at www.chicagowilderness.org.

The Mighty Acorns Program – More than 250 teachers and 8,500 urban students (data from 2002 totals) were involved in restoring their local native environments by participating in the Mighty Acorns program. The program has grown from three partners in 1998 to 21 partners in 2002.

Chicago Wilderness Magazine – 15,000 copies of this quarterly publication are distributed to 235 retail locations across the Chicago region, including more than 8,000 paid subscribers.

Budget History:

Chicago Wilderness (\$ Thousands)				
	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
Total	\$700	\$700	\$350	\$200

Future Direction:

- Continue to seek diversified funding through the Corporate Council and other venues.
- Strengthen diversification efforts through strategic planning in Chicago, Indiana, and Wisconsin.
- Complete the newly funded Chicago Wilderness *State of the Region* Report card.

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