



Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHICAGO WILDERNESS

WHEREAS, in 1996, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the District) was one of 34 organizations that joined to form Chicago Wilderness, a new and unprecedented partnership of public and private organizations dedicated to working together to preserve and improve nature conservation in our metropolitan region; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Wilderness works across geographic and political boundaries, to include regional watersheds and ecosystems that interconnect and span from southwestern Wisconsin through northeastern Illinois, northeastern Indiana and into the southwestern tip of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, twenty years later, Chicago Wilderness now has more than 200 member organizations all working to improve the health of natural communities and the quality of life of human communities in this region; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Wilderness has become a model for conservation leadership in an urban/suburban matrix, resulting in national and international recognition and inspiring the formation of the Metropolitan Greenspace Alliance, a national network of urban conservation coalitions working to promote a collaborative approach of knowledge sharing and best practices across major metropolitan areas; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Wilderness, through its launch of the Leave No Child Inside initiative, highlighted the importance of nature and unstructured time outdoors to the healthy physical, mental and emotional development of children and resulted in the passage of the Children's Bill of Outdoor Rights in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Wilderness is continually evolving to best advance our shared vision for a thriving and resilient environment that benefits all who call this region home. In 2015, Chicago Wilderness completed a strategic planning effort that resulted in a renewed focus of the alliance's mission and articulated six (6) critical conservation strategies to: 1. Protect our oak ecosystems; 2. Support 12 priority species; 3. Improve our water; 4. Engage private and public landowners; 5. Streamline data for members use; and 6. Broaden our constituency; and

WHEREAS, the District has recently completed its Next Century Conservation Plan and recognizes that the benefits of implementing this plan will result in a healthy, diverse and beautiful natural environment, cleaner air and water, opportunities for nature-related businesses, jobs and tourism, healthy and active communities, educational enrichment and research opportunities, and an enhanced quality of life for everyone in Cook County. The District also recognizes that this work cannot be accomplished without the help of partners; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Wilderness has provided numerous benefits to the District and has aided the District in advancing its mission to acquire, restore and manage lands for the purpose of protecting and preserving public open space with its natural wonders, significant prairies, forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and other landscapes with all of its associated wildlife, in a natural state for the education, pleasure, and recreation of the public now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Wilderness has created numerous resources and tools that help the District and other alliance members to better protect nature, engage people, implement green infrastructure, and communicate with a united voice the importance of protecting the natural and cultural heritage of this region; and

WHEREAS, the District has always actively participated in Chicago Wilderness serving on committees and working groups. The District's General Superintendent, Arnold Randall, has served as the Chair of the Chicago Wilderness Executive Council since 2012; and

WHEREAS, the District looks forward to continuing its participation in the Chicago Wilderness alliance to share expertise and leverage resources effectively for the benefit of all who call this region home; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, on behalf of ourselves, staff and Cook County residents do hereby congratulate Chicago Wilderness on 20 years of visionary leadership and collaborative conservation, and as a founding member of this remarkable initiative, pledge to continue our efforts to provide leadership in managing diverse land and water habitats; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, and that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Chicago Wilderness.