



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0082, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED MISCELLANEOUS ITEM OF BUSINESS

Department(s): Resource Management

Summary: Powderhorn Marsh and Prairie Nature Preserve received Bronze Accreditation through Chicago Wilderness' Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program ("EERP").

The Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program (EERP) is a program designed to recognize high-quality restoration sites and develop professional standards of excellence in natural resource management and ecological restoration. The primary purpose of the EERP is to promote best management practices in order to improve ecological restoration management efforts in the Chicago region and across the nation. The Program combines a rigorous, standards-based approach with a voluntary, comprehensive assessment process to recognize high-quality sites and the organizations that manage them.

The benefits of participating in the EERP go beyond simply restoring the ecological health of a particular site. Participation in the EERP provides agencies with opportunities for self-assessment and demonstrates on the ground commitment to Chicago Wilderness's Biodiversity Recovery Plan. It also provides an opportunity to update and clarify policies and procedures in order to ensure that demonstrated practices are in alignment with existing policies and procedures. The EERP outlines professional standards for both internal and external comparisons, thereby raising the credibility for agencies engaged in restoring sites.

Powderhorn Marsh and Prairie Nature Preserve is a 192-acre preserve located in the Calumet region of southeastern Cook County, primarily in the Village of Burnham but with select portions within the Chicago city limits. Lying within the Lake Michigan watershed, the site is a remarkable remnant of dune-and-swale habitat and a shallow, naturalized lake. It has been identified as an Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site, and 130 acres are dedicated as a State Nature Preserve by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission.

Powderhorn Marsh and Prairie Nature Preserve holds significant biodiversity and six state-listed plant and animal species. The site reflects the unusual plant communities' characteristic of sandy dune-and-swale remnants: black oak barrens, dry, mesic, and wet sand prairies, sedge meadows, and emergent wetlands. Because of its proximity to Lake Michigan, Powderhorn Marsh and Prairie Nature Preserve is also recognized and managed as a critical migratory bird stop-over site.