

**2018**

# COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP REPORT



Since 2015, The Chicago Park District (CPD) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have worked together to engage communities in natural areas stewardship across the city. With native habitat comprising more than 20 percent of the District's 8,800 acres of parkland, CPD relies on volunteers working alongside staff and contractors to help our dunes, prairies, woodlands and wetlands thrive. From removing invasive species to monitoring plants and wildlife, volunteers of diverse ages and backgrounds play a critical role in keeping these areas healthy and welcoming for all.



COVER PHOTO: AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, *SPINUS TRISTIS*, MAKES USE OF LAKEFRONT FORAGING HABITAT AT LOYOLA PARK NATURAL AREA WHILE VOLUNTEERS REMOVE INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE BACKGROUND. © EMANUEL LOVE  
PAGE 2 PHOTO: VOLUNTEERS MONITOR PURPLE MARTIN NESTING HOUSES AT MONTROSE HARBOR. © JENNIFER EMERLING  
PAGE 3 PHOTO: VOLUNTEERS PLANT NATIVE SEEDLINGS AT PING TOM MEMORIAL PARK. © LAURA STOECKER

"I'M SO APPRECIATIVE OF OUR VOLUNTEER STEWARDS, WHO ARE AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE FOR NATURE IN CHICAGO. THEY NOT ONLY SPEND SO MANY HOURS IMPROVING THE PRAIRIES AND WOODLANDS THROUGH THEIR PHYSICAL LABOR, BUT THEY ALSO ACT AS ADVOCATES TO PROTECT OUR NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA."

-MATT FREER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LANDSCAPE - NATURAL AREAS,  
CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

"I GO BIRDING IN CPD NATURAL AREAS ACROSS CHICAGO, AND IT'S SO HEARTENING TO SEE THE TERRIFIC NATURAL HABITATS THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE HELPING TO NURTURE, SEASON BY SEASON. THEY HAVE GIVEN ME SO MANY GREAT NATURE EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE CITY!"

-JOHN LEGGE, CHICAGO CONSERVATION DIRECTOR,  
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE  
INCREDIBLE IMPACT  
VOLUNTEERS HAD ON  
OUR NATURAL AREAS  
IN 2018:



"TRUE RESTORATION OF OUR NATURAL AREAS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE DEDICATION, EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE, GENUINE CARE AND HARD WORK FROM OUR STEWARDS AND VOLUNTEERS. THANK YOU FOR THE MANY HOURS YOU HAVE PROVIDED IN VALUABLE LAND STEWARDSHIP THIS SEASON. YOUR EFFORTS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND DO NOT GO UNNOTICED!"

-KELLY BOUGHER, NATURAL AREAS TECHNICIAN,  
CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

**22,200+**  
HOURS CONTRIBUTED

**9,000+**  
VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED

**480+**  
COMMUNITY  
STEWARDSHIP EVENTS

**7.5 YEARS**  
AVERAGE LENGTH OF  
STEWARD SERVICE

**13,575**  
INDIVIDUAL NATIVE PLANTS  
PLANTED

**\$548,118**  
DOLLAR VALUE OF  
VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED\*

\*CALCULATION BASED ON THE 2018 INDEPENDENT SECTOR  
ESTIMATE OF THE VALUE OF A VOLUNTEER HOUR (\$24.69)

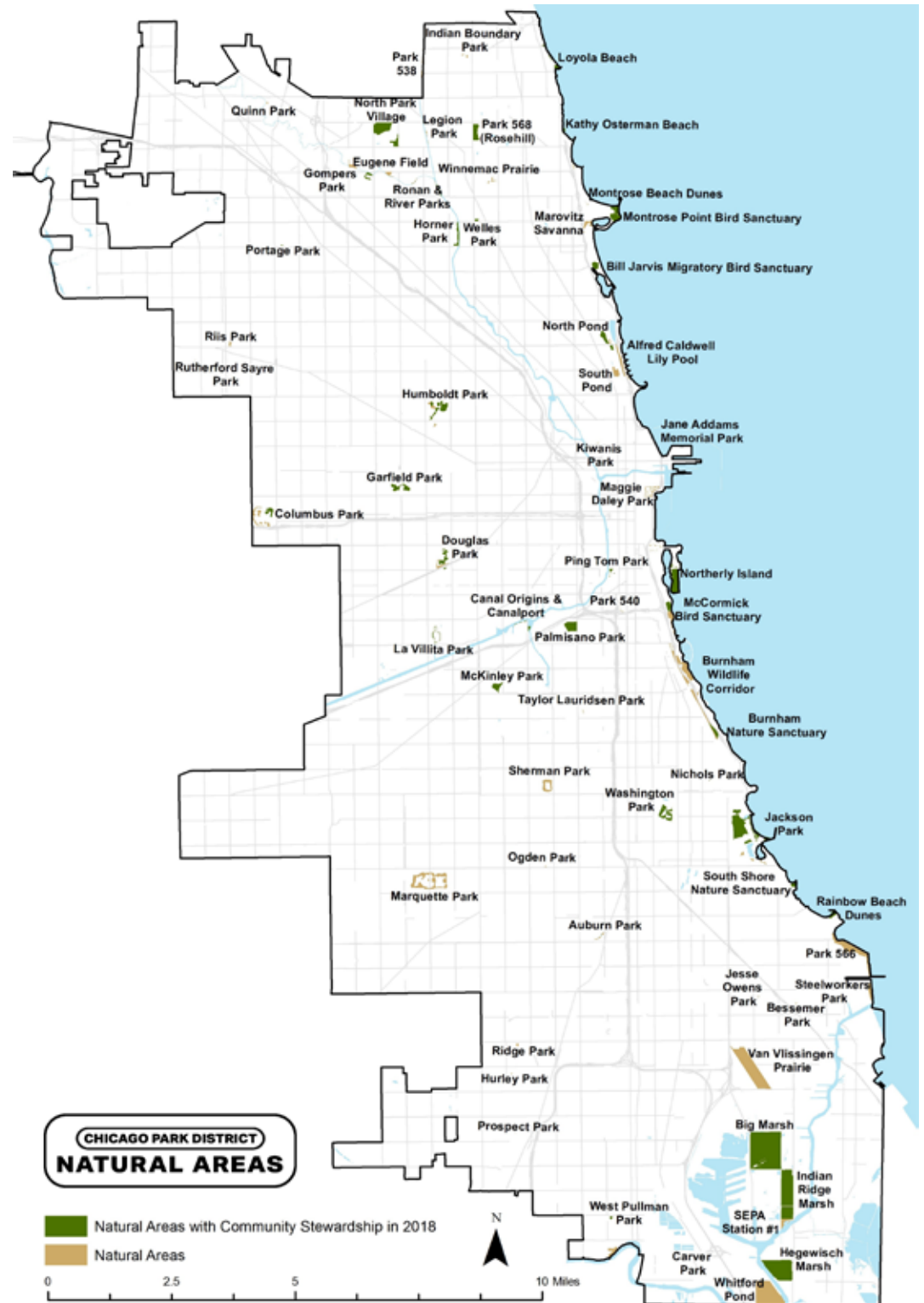
90+  
NATURAL AREAS

1,800+  
ACRES

40  
SITES IMPACTED  
BY VOLUNTEERS



OBEDIENT PLANT, *PHYSOSTEGIA VIRGINIANA* © EMANUEL LOVE



# SNAPSHOTS FROM THE FIELD



SOUTH SHORE NATURE SANCTUARY. © FORREST CORTES

## Rapid Floristic Quality Assessment

In 2018, we trained district stewards and staff in a new monitoring protocol designed by the Chicago Botanic Garden for CPD. The Rapid Floristic Quality Assessment (RFQA) relies on meander-based sampling and a checklist of common and easy-to-identify species to collect qualitative information on relative habitat quality and change over time. Starting in 2019, volunteers will help mobilize this new protocol to collect data on urban habitat restoration progress.

“Developing and fine-tuning the RFQA protocol has been a great collaborative experience that has produced a specialized tool that will give CPD a better understanding of how the city’s natural areas are responding to our ongoing restoration and management efforts,” says Devin Rigolino, CPD project manager.



S.K.Y. COUNCIL MEMBER SOLOME GIBSON MONITORS MONARCHS IN THE BURNHAM WILDLIFE CORRIDOR. © LAURA STOECKER

## Burnham Wildlife Corridor

Monarch butterflies got a helping hand from members of the Sacred Keepers Sustainability Lab’s Youth Council (S.K.Y. Council) in 2018. Rain or shine, S.K.Y. Council members monitored lakefront natural areas for milkweed host plants and monarch butterfly eggs, larvae and adults. In September, the youth helped organize a cross-cultural exchange of migration stories between Little Village and Bronzeville community members, paired with a planting to enhance pollinator habitat at the Burnham Wildlife Corridor.

“Sacred Keepers’ goal is to connect youth to education, training and career opportunities through the study of environmental value systems, climate and culture. In the six years since the organization was formed, the S.K.Y. Council has established seven monarch habitats and planted between 5,000 and 6,000 native plugs and 400 trees across Chicagoland and Kenya, Africa,” says Toni Anderson, Sacred Keepers’ executive director. “We’ve had great results, but the most impactful are the ones we see within ourselves. There’s an internal and external transformation the Council members go through as they connect to nature and each other.”

# SNAPSHOTS FROM THE FIELD



INDIAN PAINTBRUSH, *CASTILLEJA COCCINEA*. © EMANUEL LOVE



WASHINGTON PARK NATURAL AREA. © FORREST CORTES

## Washington Park

We celebrated the incredible dedication of Madiem Kawa, who served as Washington Park's community steward for 11 years and retired in 2018. Madiem is a certified Master Gardener and Openlands TreeKeeper who took on the role in 2007.

"I lived across the street and could see the park," she recalls. "One day my husband and I took a walk through it and it was in need of help: the plants were overgrown, there was glass in the playground and the water fountain wasn't working. There was a posting for a steward, so I decided to get involved."

Since she started, the habitat quality in the lagoon has improved, and dragonflies, bumblebees and

numerous bird species have returned to the park's natural areas. Madiem also worked hard to increase youth engagement during her tenure by creating volunteer programs specifically for teens, like Teen Ecological Adventure.

"It's so important for people and children to have a place to get away in nature, play in the grass and experience serenity," she says. "I used to take walks with my grandmother in our local park and collect the leaves or play softball with my brother. I wanted to bring my experience and my love of nature into the community as my contribution."



BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, *SETOPHAGA FUSCA*. © EMANUEL LOVE



KILLDEER, *CHARADRIUS VOCIFERUS*. © EMANUEL LOVE

## Chicago's Lakefront

For a number of years, the Shedd Aquarium and CPD have partnered to steward Chicago's lakefront. In 2018, we expanded our partnership to increase the number of waterfront sites impacted by Shedd's Great Lakes Action Days.

"Shedd is committed to protecting the aquatic animals that live in Lake Michigan and other local waterways. Restoring Chicago's coastlines is a critical step toward this cause," says Hilary Wind, conservation stewardship facilitator at Shedd Aquarium. "In partnering with CPD, we're able to activate more volunteers from local communities in meaningful stewardship opportunities to remove litter from our shorelines, take out invasive species, and plant native grasses and wildflowers."

Now, in addition to hosting school and group volunteers, we jointly host public workdays at 63rd Street Beach Dunes, 12th Street Beach and Ping Tom Memorial Park. We are also jointly hosting volunteer groups at La Rabida Park.

"Engaging Chicago communities in meaningful conservation actions is more important now than ever," says Bridget Coughlin, Ph.D., president and CEO of Shedd Aquarium. "In our increasingly digital culture, both children and adults are spending less time outdoors. By gathering together out in nature to explore and protect fish, birds and other local wildlife, we can spark compassion and curiosity for the living world that surrounds us."

# SNAPSHOTS FROM THE FIELD



RATTLESNAKE MASTER, *ERYNGIUM YUCCIFOLIUM*. © EMANUEL LOVE



TIGER SWALLOWTAIL, *PAPILIO GLAUCUS*, ON WILD BERGAMOT, *MONARDA FISTULOSA*. © EMANUEL LOVE



BURNHAM WILDLIFE CORRIDOR. © EMANUEL LOVE

A special thank you to our community stewards...

Alison Anastasio, Annette Anderson, Norm Bell, Leslie Borns, Heather Breems, Laura Brentner, Dan Brown, Becky Collings, Maggie Cooper, Sydney Coyle, George Davis, Julie DiDomenico, Suzanne Erin, Pat Fox, Katie Flores, Sharon Gerbe-Naylor, Karen Gibson, Aaron Hammond, Sarah Henderson, Nancy Joseph, Ted Jindrich, Cathy Kasper, Madiem Kawa, Lisa Klobuchar, Alycia Klunenber, Carla Lents, Jerry Levy, Renata Listopad, Rochelle Lodder, Jackie Majdov, Linda Montanero, Don Morrison, Gary Morrissey, Tom Murphy, Joe Neumann, Charlotte Newfeld, Julie Newfeld, Sharon Parmet, Renee Patten, Gail Perry, Jaclyn Peterson, Joel Porterfield, Greg Pranski, Jen Raber, Vera Rast, Mike Roche, Terry Schilling, Eleanor Shunas, Kathleen Taylor, Teri Valenzuela, Stephan Vandembroucke, Fran Vandervoort, Edward Warden, Teresa Weed, Ann Whelan, Hilary Wind

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

CPD volunteers make an incredible difference for Chicago's lands and waters. By collecting native seed, removing invasive species, maintaining trails and conducting other essential stewardship activities, volunteers help native plants and wildlife thrive and protect our wild spaces for future generations.

Hard work and seasonal changes take a toll on the equipment that helps our volunteers get the job done. As a result, volunteers are always in need of new work gloves, trowels, loppers, trash pickers and more! Consider donating funds so we can purchase these tools. Donations also help pay for valuable training, as well as native plant material used across the city.

You can help by making a contribution to support volunteer efforts in CPD natural areas. To learn more, contact Ken Modzelewski at 312-580-2128.



MONARCH BUTTERFLY, *DANAUS PLEXIPPUS*.  
© CHARLES LARRY



For more information on the Community Stewardship Program, contact [stewardship@chicagoparkdistrict.com](mailto:stewardship@chicagoparkdistrict.com).