



Friends of the Parks works to protect, improve and expand Chicago's parks and forest preserves in Cook County.

# Friends of the Parks Advocate

www.fotp.org

Spring 2011

## Investigations by the BGA and News Media Lead to Major Changes at the Chicago Park District

For over six months, the Better Government Association (BGA) and Fox Chicago News investigated irregularities in personal expenditures and hiring at the Chicago Park District. Their findings included a department head who issued a fitness contract to his live-in girlfriend, hiring of the city's Fleet Management Director who had been previously fired for demolishing a city car while drunk, and abuse of travel expenses by the General Superintendent and Chief of Staff.

On May 31, Tim Mitchell resigned as General Superintendent and will leave the post sometime in June. During his seven-year tenure, Mitchell led the Park District to acquire over 1,000 acres of new park land and created a number of new parks.

However, the troubling management

identified by the BGA and Fox Chicago News opens up the broader question of internal management of one of the nation's largest park systems. Much needs to be done to make the Chicago Park District more accountable, efficient, professional and transparent.

As the Board of Commissioners moves forward, Friends of the Parks believes the Chicago Park District and the city would benefit by hiring a General Superintendent with professional experience in parks and recreation. The Chicago Park District should be transformed into a public agency that is transparent and clear in all its financial dealings and decisions, is devoid of political influence and has defined measurements of effectiveness with up-to-date data from both the central administration

and local park levels.

In addition, the Park District should have an independent inspector who regularly completes audits of departments and of individual parks. Finally, the Park District should change direction and embrace community involvement. Unfortunately, tension has existed in recent years between local park advisory councils and the central administration that has resulted in wasted tax dollars and missed opportunities for funding for additional programs and community partnering.

Change is needed at the Chicago Park District and we look forward to working with the Board of Commissioners and the new General Superintendent to improve the management and operation of Chicago's parks, playgrounds and lakefront. 🌿

## Friends of the Parks Awards \$10,000 in Seed Grants to Park Advisory Councils Throughout the City

Since 2003, Friends of the Parks has awarded more than \$100,000 to park advocacy councils in Seed Grant funds.

Friends of the Parks designed its Seed Grant Program to build stronger communities, develop alliances and foster a sense of care for parks. Through this program, park advisory councils apply for small grants to support local park projects to "green" parks, provide children's programs and activities, offer free special events and sponsor innovative cultural programs.

This year, Friends of the Parks awarded \$10,000 in Seed Grant funds to 13 park advisory councils and community groups in parks across the city of Chicago.

2011 Seed Grant Awardees include:

**American Indian Center/ Dunning-Read Conservation Area**

Instructor for fragmities hutch

**Armour Square Park**

Flower planters

**Bowmanville Community Organization**

Memorial rose garden and pergola

**Chase Park Theater**

Costumes for theater productions

**Commercial Park**

Children's gardening project

**Kelles Park**

Stage for cultural festival

**Lowe Park**

Pink Panther double dutch program

**Northtown Garden Society/Warren Park Terrarium**

**Rutherford Sayer Park**

Mural on underpass connecting to park

**Skinner Park**

New planters for the park

**Unity Park**

Parking lot markers: hop scotch, 4 square, United States map

**Wells Park**

Drum equipment

**Wicker Park**

Sunday children's puppet show

Congratulations to all of our Seed Grant recipients! 🌿

# Injury Free Chicago Releases Playground Safety Study

During the summer of 2010, a team of trained playground safety inspectors surveyed 477 Chicago Park District-owned playgrounds. Under the supervision of Injury Free Chicago, researchers evaluated surfacing, age, equipment maintenance, safety issues and the physical environment.

Results found that 63% of Chicago's parks met national safety standards, while 37% did not. Overall, 299 of the 477 playgrounds were rated as safe for children, while 178 playgrounds were found to have safety issues with equipment or soft surface material.

The 2010 Playground Safety Study found an improvement in the safety of playgrounds since its study in 2008, when 70% of CPD playgrounds did not meet safety standards. After learning results of the 2008 study, Park District officials committed to repair playgrounds, hire and train staff to make regular equipment repairs, and pay close attention to the condition and depth of Fibar soft surfacing materials.

Friends of the Parks acknowledges the Chicago Park District for making strides with playground maintenance and repair. The number of playgrounds meeting national safety standards increased from 30% in 2008 to 54% in 2009, and to 63% in 2010.

Inspectors again surveyed playgrounds in summer and early fall 2010.



Mary Bartelme Park, located at Adams and Sangamon in the West Loop, features one of Chicago's newest children's playgrounds.

They visited each playground and graded each in four basic areas: age-appropriateness of equipment, soft-surfacing near play areas, equipment maintenance and overall physical lay-out. A score below 70% meant the playground did not meet national safety standards.

The following is a summary of the

2010 Playground Safety Study by region (South, Central and North). Although every effort was made to survey each playground in the park district system, surveyors may have inadvertently missed some playgrounds. To see the score of all 479 playgrounds surveyed, visit Friends of the Parks' website at [www.FOTP.org](http://www.FOTP.org).

Region	Number of Playgrounds	Met Safety Standards	Did Not Meet Safety Standards	% Passed	% Failed
Central	103	69	34	67%	33%
North	188	115	73	62%	38%
South	186	115	71	62%	38%

# MWRD Board Approves Wildlife and Bird Habitat Study

The Board of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) of Greater Chicago voted 9-0 in favor of requesting



Photo: Chicago Ornithological Society  
A Great Blue Heron nests on Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago property at O'Brien Lock and Dam (Whitford Pond) on March 15, 2011.

the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) conduct a baseline wildlife and bird habitat survey on 140 acres of District property located near the O'Brien Lock and Dam on the Southeast Side of Chicago.

This area, designated for restoration in the City's Open Space Reserve Plan, includes a 33-acre parcel of land proposed for a regional police outdoor firing range along the Calumet River near the O'Brien Locks.

Nine environmental and open space organizations, including Friends of the Parks, petitioned the City and MWRD to "take another look" at the ill-conceived decision by MWRD to allow construc-

tion of an outdoor police firing range on environmentally-sensitive land. Activists are concerned about noise from the range and its effect on birds nesting along the Calumet River, and nearby woods and ponds. We question why this property was selected for a hazardous project rather than for wildlife preservation. Lake Calumet has been singled out as a significant wetland and natural area within the city and is in critical need of some form of protection in the Open Space Plan for Chicago (CitySpace adopted May 1998).

The baseline study by IDNR would review impacts of a police firing range on migrating birds and wildlife. Friends of the Parks will continue monitoring this proposal.

## Friends of the Parks' Policy Chair Selected as Illinois State Representative for Hyde Park

A panel of Democratic leaders selected Kimberly du Buclet – Friends of the Parks' Policy Chairperson, a former business executive and college instructor – to represent Hyde Park in the Illinois House of Representatives in the 26th District, filling a vacancy left by Representative Will Burns, who was recently elected Alderman of the 4th Ward.

Kim du Buclet is self-employed and runs an executive search agency. She has worked at AT&T and served as an undergraduate counselor at the University of Chicago and professional development instructor at Roosevelt University. She has

been a Board member and Policy Chair of Friends of the Parks for over a decade. She said she will work to stop rampant foreclosure, ensure that budget cuts do not harm those most in need, and keep streets safer by opposing a proposal that would allow private citizens to carry concealed weapons.

Toni Preckwinkle, President of the Cook County Board, said du Buclet "is a very smart and talented young person who will be able hit the ground running with only a few weeks remaining before lawmakers are scheduled to break for the summer." 🌱



*We congratulate Kim du Buclet on her recent appointment as Illinois State Representative for Chicago's Hyde Park community. She has served on Friends of the Parks' Board of Directors for over a decade.*

## Alderman Smith Serves as Keynote Speaker at Park Advocacy Conference Attended by 140 Guests

The 2nd Annual Park Advocacy Conference "PACs Make it Happen" was a collaborative effort between Friends of the Parks and the Chicago Park District. On March 19 at the South Shore Cultural Center, more than 140 park advisory council representatives met for a morning of

networking and information gathering.

To kick off the conference, retiring Alderman Mary Ann Smith (48th Ward), presented the keynote address, "Greening a Park-Poor Community." Her inspirational talk was filled with sage and practical advice for park advisory council members.

She gave examples of park, playground and open space projects that helped turn parks in the 48th Ward into heart centers of their neighborhoods.

Alderman Smith advised how to work in partnership with one's alderman and with the Chicago Park District to renovate parks and create new parks in communities. She gave examples of restoring children's playgrounds, beautifying underpasses at Bryn Mawr, Foster and Wilson with community-driven mosaics, developing new parks and playgrounds in areas of need, and greening streets with traffic-calming projects.

Break-out sessions followed Smith's address. Presented by park advisory council members and Chicago Park District representatives, topics included park security, park programming, permits, liability insurance and social media. 🌱



*Alderman Mary Ann Smith (48th Ward) presented the keynote address at Friends of the Parks' 2nd annual Park Advocacy Conference, titled "PACs Make it Happen."*

## Construction of Navy Pier Flyover to Finally Begin

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) proposes to construct The Navy Pier Flyover, an elevated multi-use recreational path on the lakefront trail from Ohio Street to DuSable Harbor. The project has been in the works for nearly a decade as a solution to the congestion problems with park users, pedestrians, and bicyclists conflicting with motor traf-

fic leading to Navy Pier.

The bridge will begin just north of Ohio Street on the lakefront and will rise to the level of Lake Shore Drive adjacent to Lake Point Tower. The Flyover will cross over the Chicago River and then slope down to touch ground in DuSable Harbor. Construction will take place in three phases beginning at Ohio Street on

the north. The lakefront path will be kept open during construction

Friends of the Parks supported the Navy Pier Flyover with the recommendation that the segment over DuSable Park be redesigned to eliminate any negative impacts to the future development of DuSable Park. 🌱

# Jackson Park Advisory Council in Full Swing to Restore Wooded Island and Bobolink Meadow

The Jackson Park Advisory Council (JPAC) has new leadership and new naturalist stewards for both the Wooded Island and Bobolink Meadow. Working with the Chicago Park District natural resources staff, the lead stewards and volunteers are following an adopted plan to restore Wooded Island and Bobolink Meadow with strategic plantings of native trees, shrubs and perennial flowers. Volunteers planted native plant seeds in Bobolink Meadow. In early April, the Chicago Park District, assisted by a JPAC member who happens to be an ironworker, repaired the chain link fence and gates surrounding the rose garden.

The Chicago Park District has responded to concerns about security in Jackson Park by assigning a full-time detail to the park

JPAC plans to involve local schools in science projects within the park, and plans to develop teaching activities to introduce young people to the great outdoors. Juniors and seniors from Hyde Park Career Academy will earn service learning hours through park work.

The group will create an interactive nature trail in Wooded Island and nearby areas that would be used for monthly



*This beautiful photo shows Jackson Park in full bloom - Scylla (commonly called squill) blankets the park in all its blue glory each spring.*

*Photo: Marc Monaghan*

walking tours of the Park. In addition, the group plans a dog-friendly area for Jackson Park. Park cleanups are taking place near La Rabida Hospital and around the marinas in addition to the regular clean ups at Bobolink Meadow and on Wooded Island.

Jackson Park volunteer workdays for the Bobolink Meadow will take place on the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 am to noon. Contact the stewards,

Gail Parry and Norm Bell, at parrybell@comcast.net for details. Wooded Island volunteer workdays are set for the fourth Saturday of each month from 2:00–5:00 pm. Contact the steward, Jerry Levy, at sjlevy@jeromelevylaw.com for details. The group hosts bird watching tours every Saturday beginning at 8:00 am starting at the Darrow Bridge. 🌿

*This story was submitted by Louise McCurry.*

## Friends of the Parks Co-Hosts “Connecting Communities” Symposium to Promote New Trails in Chicago’s Calumet Area

Friends of the Parks, Chicago State University and the Lake Calumet Vision Committee hosted a “*Connecting Communities: Trails, Open Spaces, Parks and Natural Areas*” symposium. The groups organized the educational event to help create a shared vision linking the south lakefront park system to trails, open spaces, parks and natural areas in South Chicago and the Calumet area.

Held at the Chicago State University library, the event began with an overview of the efforts to complete *The Last Four Miles Plan*, which would help link the south lakefront parks to each other and to other parks in the area.

Following a mapping session which highlighted South Chicago and Calumet

parks and trails, speakers discussed the importance of trails that serve to link people to their own communities and their natural and cultural heritage. Speaking to the value of trail connections, the presenters identified how well-planned greenway connections support a sustainable ecology; offer significant economic benefits; and provide opportunities for alternative transportation, stewardship, healthier lifestyles and outdoor recreation.

A follow-up workshop, “*Connecting Communities: On the Ground*,” focused on planning trails to link open

spaces, parks and natural areas in South Chicago and the Calumet area. Working groups will continue to design community-connecting trails. 🌿



*Guests at the “Connecting Communities” symposium discussed ways in which trails can link open spaces, parks and natural areas in South Chicago and the Calumet area.*

# Friends Indeed

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We gratefully acknowledge these important contributors who so generously support Friends of the Parks.

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# Volunteers Clean and Green During Earth Day Parks and Preserves Clean-Up at 100 Sites

Each year, we are thrilled by the huge number of volunteers who participate in our Earth Day clean-up. This year's event was no exception. Friends of the Parks held its annual citywide clean-up on Saturday, April 16. Even with bad weather threatening most of our sites, volunteers came out to 100 park and preserve locations!

We appreciate the support from our Earth Day planning committee members from the Chicago Park District, Chicago Wilderness, American Indian Center, Student Conservation Association and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

We held the Earth Day celebration event at Humboldt Park. Arnold Randall, the new General Superintendent of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, gave a warm welcome to our big group of volunteers. We wish to thank Exelon, our presenting sponsor, as well as Simple Green, Hyatt Corporation, REI and Ford Motor Company, as well as The Care of Trees and Possibility Place. 🌱



*Volunteers from Exelon Corporation work on a trail at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area.*



*Fernando Delgado, a student at Kelyvn Park High School, created the winning Earth Day 2011 t-shirt design.*



*TreeKeeper Jim DeHorn (left) plants an oak tree with volunteers in Lincoln Park.*

## Rainbow Beach Gets Fit and Healthy at Earth Day Fair

After spending the morning picking up litter in Rainbow Beach Park (7500 S. South Shore Drive), Rainbow Beach Park Advisory Council members helped their neighbors become healthier by hosting its first-ever Health and Fitness Fair in partnership with Friends of the Parks, the Chicago Park District and numerous health and wellness organizations around Chicago.



*Children learned cheerleading skills at the Health and Fitness Fair.*

This joint effort promoted health and wellness in the Rainbow Beach and South Shore communities and beyond. Guests lined up for blood pressure screenings, participated in exercise and handball classes, and learned healthy tips in a cooking class. U.S. Coast Guard members taught people the proper way to put on a life vest. A healthy dose of fun was had by all! 🌱

**Earth Day (cont'd)**



Volunteers from Exelon Corporation cleaned the lagoon edge in Jackson Park and planted 25 native trees in support of Earth Day.



Volunteers from Exelon Corporation plant trees for Earth Day.



Volunteers, led by Humboldt Park Block Club Federation founder Maggie Martinez, planted and dedicated a new tree in Humboldt Park in honor of Mayor Richard M. Daley for Earth Day.



Volunteers help clean up Ravenswood Manor Park on Earth Day.



Volunteers from the Chicago Bar Association spread mulch along the trail at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area on Earth Day.

## Friends of the Parks Helps Increase Chicago's Tree Canopy

With a grant from Exelon Corporation and support from Hyatt Corporation and Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company, Friends of the Parks has increased Chicago's tree canopy as part of our Chicago Tree Initiative program. Since the beginning of 2011, Friends of the Parks has planted 73 trees, with an additional 75 trees to be planted in the fall.

Despite a very wet spring this year, we planted trees with Exelon Corporation

employees in Jackson Park, Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company employees in Lincoln Park, and WXRT Radio staff members at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area.

In the fall, Hyatt Corporation intends to plant 25 trees in the nature area of Burnham Centennial Park. Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company will plant 25 trees in Washington Park as part of its Adopt-a-Park project. 🌱



In April, volunteers from Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company moved large trees for planting in Lincoln Park.



Volunteers from WXRT Radio and Craftsman Experience planted six 600 lb. oak trees at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area as part of this year's Earth Day celebration.

# Friends of the Parks Welcomes 200 Attendees at its 35th Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon

Friends of the Parks celebrated its 35th Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon in February with nearly 200 attendees at the Chicago Cultural Center downtown just one day after the winter's worst blizzard.

Ernest Wong presented the keynote address, titled "Exciting Urban Park Designs for the 21st Century: Designing Bartelme, Ping Tom and Stearns Quarry Parks." Wong is the founder and Principal of Site Design Group, one of the most successful landscape architecture firms in the City of Chicago. Under his leadership, the Site Design Group has earned a reputation for providing creative park designs that weave seamlessly into their surrounding neighborhoods. He discussed the planning and design of three award-winning parks: Mary Barthelme Park in the West Loop, Ping Tom Park in the Chinatown community, and Stearns Quarry on the Near South Side.

Friends of the Parks presented nine awards to individuals and groups who accomplished the most to improve parks in 2010:

**Gary Ossewaarde** – *Individual Award* for two decades of work as a leading volunteer in South Side parks, including South Shore Cultural Center and Bixler, Elm, Jackson and Nichols Parks  
**Cubs Care** – *Corporate Award* for its commitment through donations of millions of dollars for new children's playgrounds, ball fields, park enhancements and sports programs for children in Chicago's parks; in addition, Cubs Care funded baseball programs for children in the Cubs Care-Chicago Park District Rookie League in over 90 Chicago parks

**After School Matters** – *Community Award* for its very successful program of engaging Chicago's youth in creative and unique environmental after school apprenticeship programs

**Low Park Advisory Council** – *Park Advisory Council Award* for its strong advocacy for quality programming and to ensure equity in day camp opportunities for children in Lowe Park on the city's South Side

**Clark Park Advisory Council** – *Park*

*Advisory Council Award* for hosting one of the city's most unusual and successful events, the Moonlight Canoe Paddle, as well as for volunteer work days and advocacy to protect Richard Clark Park from a roadway expansion

**Edgewater Community Council** – *Advocacy Award* for developing and producing the Edgewater Environmental Sustainability Project, which charts the Edgewater community's path to a green future; the plan reclaims its lakefront and supports the creation of new parks and playgrounds for all of Edgewater

**Alderman Walter Burnett** – *Legislative Award* for his commitment to develop new parks, children's playgrounds and dog-friendly areas in the 27th Ward; he has allocated both TIF and aldermanic menu dollars to help construct parks in his ward

**Alderman Rey Colon** – *Legislative Award* for his commitment to new park development, public involvement, new green spaces and dog-friendly areas in the 35th Ward



Our keynote speaker Ernest Wong (second from right) is pictured with Peter Osler (left), Chair of the Master of Architecture program at the Illinois Institute of Technology; Robert Sit (second from left) and Amy Beltermacchi (middle) from Site Design Group; and Philip Enquist (right) from Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

**Timuel Black** – the *Leon M. Despres Lifetime Commitment to Parks Award* for his lifelong work on parks, including his involvement in founding Friends of the Parks, pushing for the equitable distribution of park resources throughout the city, helping to save the South Shore Country Club (now the South Shore Cultural Center) and teaching about the importance of parks as a quality of life issue

Congratulations to all of our award winners! 🌱



**Laressa Williams** from Lowe Park Advisory Council (above left) accepted the group's award from Erma Tranter and Lauren Moltz.

**Bill Donahue** from Clark Park Advisory Council (above) is pictured with Erma Tranter and Lauren Moltz.

**Gary Ossewaarde** (right) stands with Fran Vandervoort and Louise McCurry.

**Timuel Black** (above right) received the Leon M. Despres Lifetime Commitment to Parks Award.

Friends of the Parks presented awards to individuals and groups who accomplished the most to improve parks in 2010. Laressa Williams from Lowe Park Advisory Council (above left) accepted the group's award from Erma Tranter and Lauren Moltz. Bill Donahue from Clark Park Advisory Council (above) is pictured with Erma Tranter and Lauren Moltz. Award recipient Gary Ossewaarde (right) stands with Fran Vandervoort and Louise McCurry. Timuel Black (above right) received the Leon M. Despres Lifetime Commitment to Parks Award.



# Neighborhood Park News: Community Groups Active on Diverse Issues Around the City

## Edgewater Supports West Edgewater Park

Friends of West Edgewater Park (FOWEP), a newly-established group, developed an architectural plan and vision for the City to acquire the shuttered Edgewater Medical Center (5700 N. Ashland) for a future park.

The Edgewater community is a densely-developed community with highrise buildings on the east and built-up neighborhoods throughout. The CitySpace Plan identified Edgewater as being underserved by parks. Residents immediately identified the Edgewater Medical Center as a unique opportunity to acquire land on the western side of the community for a future park. The 2.8-acre parcel is large enough for a park with active sports play, a children's playground and green space.

Friends of the Parks supports the West Edgewater Park plan to create a 2.8-acre public park. We believe that every community should be served with adequate park space to meet basic community needs. Edgewater does not yet meet that requirement, and the Edgewater Medical Center site, if developed as a park, would move Edgewater forward toward achieving a bare minimum of park space.

In the February 2011 mayoral election, a special referendum was organized by FOWEP. Residents in five precincts voted in favor of a park at the Edgewater Medical Center site. Precincts 41 and 42 voted 89% in favor of park development, while precincts 22, 33 and 46 voted 86% in favor of park development.

## Golden Gate Park Advisory Council Requests Improvements

The Golden Gate Park Advisory Council submitted its top-five list of improvements. Located in the Riverdale community of Chicago, Golden Gate Park is over five acres in size with a children's playground and ball fields. Council members requested a walking track with wellness stations, park benches along the walkways, and a gazebo or pavilion for meetings and events with an arbor on top. They want new equipment for the park's 20-year-old children's playground. Finally, the community requested that the Park District acquire additional adjacent space to expand the park.

## A Bridge Club Grows at Women's Park

Bring together the need for additional adult programming at the new Women's Park and residents' passion for the game of bridge and you have the birth of the Prairie District Bridge Club. Formed last fall by a neighborhood park volunteer, a Friday morning Introduction to Bridge class took place for eleven weeks. At the same time, beginner to advanced bridge players gathered Friday afternoons in the park fieldhouse for social bridge. The Friday afternoon Bridge Club now continues year-round and the club boasts 25 members and growing.

A Saturday afternoon group started in April and runs until summer. Members of the Prairie District Bridge Club come both from the immediate neighborhood and as far away as Beverly and Riverside. Classes and sessions are open to all and will start again in the fall. For more information, contact Women's Park at [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com).

## Claremont Neighbors Dream of a New Playground

This winter, about 30 residents from the Tri-Taylor neighborhood on the Near West Side established the Claremont Park Advisory Council. The group had been meeting informally over the previous couple of months to discuss ways the community could improve Claremont Park (2334 W. Flournoy). Specifically, the group focused their attention on the children's playground, which was in poor condition and has exceeded its life span.

The PAC's efforts quickly garnered attention and support from Alderman

Robert Fioretti (2nd Ward) and Alderman Daniel Solis (25th Ward), both of whom agreed with the group's plans. Both park-friendly officials committed aldermanic menu funds to build a new playground. Council members also received support from Friends of the Parks through networking events, conferences and advice.

The council has met with Chicago Park District officials, who assigned a project manager. As their fundraising campaign kicks off to secure funds for the playground, other improvements are underway at Claremont Park including fence repairs and relocations, pedestrian gate installations, and minor landscaping improvements. To learn more go to [www.claremontpark.weebly.com](http://www.claremontpark.weebly.com)

## Abbott Park's Legacy Wall of Honor Project

In 1975, the Abbott Park Bicentennial Planning Committee initiated a history and culture project. Over the past 36 years, Abbott Park's Historical Society has hosted many picnics, festivals and sports events. In 1999, the Bicentennial Planning Committee became the New Millennium Planning Committee for the purpose of building a Legacy Wall of Honor. The Legacy Wall will focus on Robert S. Abbott (founder of the Chicago Defender newspaper) and other Abbott Park area persons from four communities near the 95th Street Corridor. The group is collecting portraits from Lilydale, Princeton Park, West Chesterfield and Roseland Heights to be framed and installed by the Chicago Park District. Plans are in the making for the Wall of Honor to evolve into a Hall of


*(continued on page 10)*

# City of Chicago Transfers 600 Acres of Open Space to Chicago Park District

Friends of the Parks enthusiastically supported the City's transfer of approximately 600 acres of the Calumet Open Space Reserve properties to the Chicago Park District for the expansion of parks and public recreation areas on the City's Southeast side.

The parcels in the Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan include Hegewisch Marsh, Indian Ridge Marsh, Big Marsh and Van

Vlissingen/Marian Byrnes Natural Area.

The City's Department of Environment and Department of Planning acquired the parcels of land over several years. Officials examined the parcels for their ecological value, and then took steps to remediate, restore and maintain the land for community activities such as hiking, birdwatching and environmental education. 

# Lakefront Confined Disposal Facility Adjacent to Calumet Park Should be Closed and Capped

Friends of the Parks recently wrote to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) requesting that IEPA Water Pollution Control permit #2006-EA-0864 be permanently terminated on its expiration November 1, 2011.

Friends of the Parks is now working with the IEPA, Army Corps of Engineers and the Chicago Park District to ensure that "Special Condition" (5) is completed as part of this current permit requirement. "Special Condition" (5) states:

Upon completion, the site shall be covered with a five (5) foot thick clay and topsoil cap, graded to drain, and seeded and mulched to prevent erosion.

As a requirement of the 1982 approval for the construction of a toxic storage facility on Lake Michigan within the boundaries of Chicago, the Army Corps of Engineers agreed to close and cap the Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) to create

a new lakefront park adjacent to Calumet Park. The new park would be transferred to the Chicago Park District.

The CDF is filled, as one can see from the aerial photo below. As a filled CDF located on Lake Michigan's shoreline,

Friends of the Parks insists that the governmental agencies comply with the legal requirements to create a lakefront park on the closed and capped Chicago Confined Disposal Facility from 90th to 95th Streets on Lake Michigan. 🌿



Photo: Rod Sellars

*The Confined Disposal Facility (CDF), looking southwest from approximately 90th Street on Chicago's Southeast Side, is a 40-acre "bathtub-like" structure constructed to hold toxic dredged material from the Calumet River. This aerial photo shows that the CDF is filled.*

## Neighborhood Park News (cont'd)

Honor by 2015, with a bust of Robert S. Abbott to be installed in the Abbott Park Senior Satellite Center Auxiliary.

### A Star is Born at Indian Boundary Park

The Indian Boundary Park Advisory Council awarded Ariyanna Middlebrook, a student from the neighboring Daniel Boone School, a scholarship to Indian Boundary's Musical Theater Camp this summer. At camp, Ariyanna will hone her acting chops and learn movement, acting, and technique. The end of camp production will be an exciting adaptation of Labyrinth which features rock music and dancing. The show will be adapted by Indian Boundary's park supervisor Phil Martini in conjunction with music director Sherri Stoffer. Performances will be August 3, 4, and 5 at Indian Boundary Park.

### New Rules for Herbicide Application for Volunteers

The Volunteer Stewardship Network, a group of naturalists and other environmental experts, has worked to simplify the herbicide application rules for volunteers working to restore parks and preserves. After several years of review, the new rules were approved and are now of-

ficially part of Illinois' herbicide law. Park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts and other units of local government that work with volunteers will benefit from these new rules.

Herbicides are useful to control invasive plants when restoring natural areas. These new administrative rules will make it easier for volunteers to meet the state's licensing requirements.

Under the new rules, which went into effect on January 1, 2011, volunteers over 18 years of age who conduct limited herbicide applications on public lands may now satisfy the certification process by receiving annual training from a compensated employee of a park district, forest preserve district or other public body. The trainer must be an employee of the same public body that has control over the public lands where the volunteer will apply herbicides, and the trainer must also possess a current Category 6 Right-of-Way pest control applicator license issued by the Department of Agriculture.

The Nature Conservancy, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and the Illinois Department of Agriculture are currently preparing a joint letter and FAQ sheet on the new rules that will be sent

to all the volunteer coordinators and staff who work with volunteers to manage public natural areas in Illinois.

### From Beloved Park to Parking Lot — No Way!

Friends of the Parks opposes a recently proposed plan to transfer Elm Park (5215 S. Woodlawn) in Hyde Park to the city and convert the land into a parking lot to serve the existing Kimbark Plaza shopping center. Friends of the Parks, the Elm Park Advisory Council (EPAC) and the Hyde Park community all support four-acre Elm Park as an essential public park in the 4th Ward.

Elm Park features an old grove of nearly two dozen elm trees, a gazebo, large garden and children's area. EPAC has been actively working to improve the park by planting and maintaining the gardens, cleaning and greening the park, and hosting special events for the community.

We believe it is a violation of state law to transfer park property to create a parking lot.

### Carver Military Academy's Earth Team Starts a Recycling Program

The After School Matters' Earth Team at Carver Military Academy recently intro-

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## Neighborhood Park News (cont'd)

duced a recycling program at the school.

The students sought to understand the three R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – by researching the types of recyclable goods they use every day. They were surprised to learn how much trash can be recycled!

Students created a weekly report on how much was recycled at Carver. Each Earth Team class began with the collection and weigh-in of the recyclable paper gathered from recycle bins left outside each classroom. Students tabulated the weigh-ins each week and announced to the school how much material had been collected. They also displayed recycle billboards to compare weekly results. The Earth Team Class plans to expand its recycling program to include plastic and glass.

*This story was submitted by Liz Levenda and Ricky Crain.*

### **Burnham Greenway — A Tree Grows on the Southeast Side**

It's hard to pinpoint an exact moment in time when the Burnham Greenway turned from an abandoned railway to a greenway. Some people point to the 1970s when John Beniac became restless while recuperating from a heart attack. He saw the trash accumulating by the abandoned railroad tracks near his front door and began to pick it up. Neighbors began to help, and soon the community assumed informal ownership of what would become the Burnham Greenway.

Mr. Beniac is now memorialized within a grove of silver maples with a rock named "Bean's Rock" in his honor. The maples are the oldest trees planted along this stretch of what used to be railroad tracks and is now a cycling and pedestrian path. Years after the community began to care for the space, the Park District acquired the land and planted more trees. Community members continued their tradition of stewardship by planting, pruning, watering, mulching, planting flowers, and of course, picking up litter.

Most of the recent plantings are done by Trees R Beautiful, an urban forestry group with the mission of enhancing the canopy and species diversity of the trees of Southeast Chicago. Varieties include black willow, bur oak, pignut hickory, serviceberry, tulip tree, white pine, red pine, American mountain ash, shagbark hickory, and arborvitae.



*Trees R Beautiful volunteers transformed an abandoned railway into The Burnham Greenway.*

The large number of trees is made possible by the group's unusual approach to forestry. Conventional urban forestry practice focuses on planting fairly sizable (and costly) trees and providing minimal subsequent care. It's a process that works well in most urban areas, but due to the high initial cost many communities do not receive enough trees.

John Pastirik, certified Treekeeper and Trees R Beautiful volunteer, assumes most of the responsibility for ongoing care of the seedlings. John lives two blocks from the site and frequently combines tree care with dog walking. Although there is no public water source, neighbors provide hose access so that during hot summer months the trees can get additional water. This unique project could not succeed without John's dedication or the widespread community support.

### **Chicago Park District Launches Guide to Art in Chicago Parks**

The Chicago Park District launched a world wide web-based guide of more than 200 public art pieces located in 67 parks, from the dragon sculpture at Skinner Park to Washington Park's Fountain of Time. The guide provides a history, description and photo of each sculpture.

Renowned artists from all over the world have contributed to the remarkable sculptures in Chicago's parks. Daniel Chester French designed the Statue of the Republic in Jackson Park for the World's Columbian Exposition. Dessa Kirk designed Magdalene at the entrance of Grant Park at Columbus Drive.

You can learn more about the Chicago Park District's collection of permanent public art at [chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://chicagoparkdistrict.com) (search for "Guide to Art in the Parks"). 🌳

## Events calendar

### **SAT NIGHT/SUN MORNING JULY 10 MIDNIGHT-SUNRISE (1:00AM STEP-OFF)**

Join Friends of the Parks for our 23rd annual L.A.T.E. Ride. The 25-mile, after-midnight bicycle ride takes participants through downtown, the South Loop, Chinatown, Greek Town and North Side and Northwest Side neighborhoods. 8,000 riders expected! Proceeds benefit our citywide parks advocacy work. \$45 per person; \$10-\$20 volunteer rates. Log onto [www.lateride.org](http://www.lateride.org) for more details.

### **SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH JULY 9, AUGUST 13 AND SEPTEMBER 10 9:00AM – NOON**

Volunteers needed at the Dunning-Read Conservation Area for Stewardship Workdays on the second Saturday of every month. Volunteers can meet at Irving Park Road and Oak Park Avenue.

### **SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH JULY 13, AUGUST 10 AND SEPTEMBER 14**

Individuals may sign up to speak at Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners meetings via [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com) between 7:00 p.m. the Friday before each meeting and 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the board meeting. You may still sign up in person the day of the meetings between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. for the committee meetings and 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. for the People in the Parks segment of the board meeting.

Committee meetings take place at 10:30 a.m., and Board meetings take place at 4:00 p.m., both at Chicago Park District headquarters (541 N. Fairbanks, 8th Floor).

### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 9:00AM – NOON**

Friends of the Parks celebrates National Public Lands Day. Volunteers will work in Whistler Woods, the Dunning-Read Conservation Area, Washington Park and Gompers Park. For more information, please contact Mary Eileen Sullivan at (312) 857-2757 ext. 13.



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## Hartland Park Should Go Public

In 2006, as part of the Residential Planned Development (PD) Number 797 to convert a closed manufacturing plant south of Diversey and east of Clybourn (Hermitage Ave. and N. Hartland Court) into a residential neighborhood, city officials rightfully required the developer to construct a public park as part of the PD. The agreement stated:

Applicant shall dedicate the park as delineated on the Landscape Plan as "Hartland Park," to the Chicago Park District, subject to the acceptance and approval of the Chicago Park District Board. Applicant agrees at its expense, to construct the park in accordance with Chicago Park District "playlot" specifications in effect at the time of construction.

The City Council-approved PD included the detailed park plan with supporting letters from the Park District that the District would take ownership of the park.

Hartland Park was constructed according to the PD's specifications, but the park — with its new children's playground, walking paths, seating areas and planted areas — has been locked and unavailable for public use. A sign posted on the fence states that the park is private. This appears to violate the City Council Ordinance.

Friends of the Parks supported all city planned developments and ordinances that required new parks to be built as part of major redevelopment projects. As a result, the Park District has acquired new public parks in many areas of the city.

Hartland Park should be a public park. We have requested that the Park District work with the city and the alderman to transfer Hartland Park to the Park District. 🌱

### We'd Like to Hear From You!

Friends of the Parks helps residents with questions, problems and issues concerning their neighborhood parks. If you have concerns you wish to discuss or help solve, you may contact us in one of the following ways:

PHONE: (312) 857-2757 / (312) 85-PARKS

FAX: (312) 857-0656

WEB SITE: [www.fotp.org](http://www.fotp.org)

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