

ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT

5. Congressional Initiatives

Several congressional initiatives intended to explore an improved quality of urban living through expanded federal, state, and local partnerships were funded in Fiscal Year 1998.

Chicago Wilderness

Contact: David Wachtel
8 South Michigan Ave., Suite 900
Chicago, IL 60603
tel: (312) 346-8166
fax: (312) 346-5606
e-mail: dwachtel@tnc.org



Chicago Wilderness is the name for both the unique natural areas extending from northwestern Indiana through northeastern Illinois to southeastern Wisconsin and the 69 conservation organizations that have joined together to restore, protect, and manage these lands. The 200,000 acres of Chicago Wilderness provides habitat for 181 species listed as threatened or endangered in the State of Illinois and contains some of the best surviving examples of tall grass prairie and oak woodlands in the country--all this in the backyard of 8 million people.

Accomplishments in 1998:

Funding 26 projects in five target areas: science, land management, education and outreach, policy and planning, and demonstration.

Increasing member organizations from 34 to 69, with more applications pending.

Publishing *Chicago Wilderness Progress Report: The First Two Years*. The report provides an overview of Chicago Wilderness and its vision for the land.

Launching the Natural Wonders of Chicago Wilderness Campaign. Twelve sites around the region are highlighted in a natural areas guide featuring 29 nature walks, a poster depicting the native flora and fauna of the region, and a calendar highlighting some of the natural wonders of the Chicago wilderness.

Developing the region's first comprehensive vegetation map from satellite images using a \$195,000 grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The map will provide the foundation for the regional Biodiversity Recovery Plan and will allow scientists and land managers to monitor progress towards established conservation goals.

Expanding the Mighty Acorns program to five more counties in the Chicago metro area using a \$108,671 grant from the Grand Victoria Foundation. Integrated into school curricula, this program brings students in grades 3-7 to natural areas and introduces them to land stewardship.