

Openlands 2026-2030 Strategic Plan

About Openlands

Openlands is a leading regional conservation nonprofit and a nationally accredited land trust.

We use land conservation to safeguard the environment and strengthen our communities. Protected land is a public good, and everyone deserves access to nature and its benefits. Our work includes land preservation, policy and planning, civic leadership, and community programs.

For more than 60 years, we've helped protect places you know and love—from the Chicago lakefront and Indiana Dunes, to North Park Village, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Openlands Lakeshore Preserve, and Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.

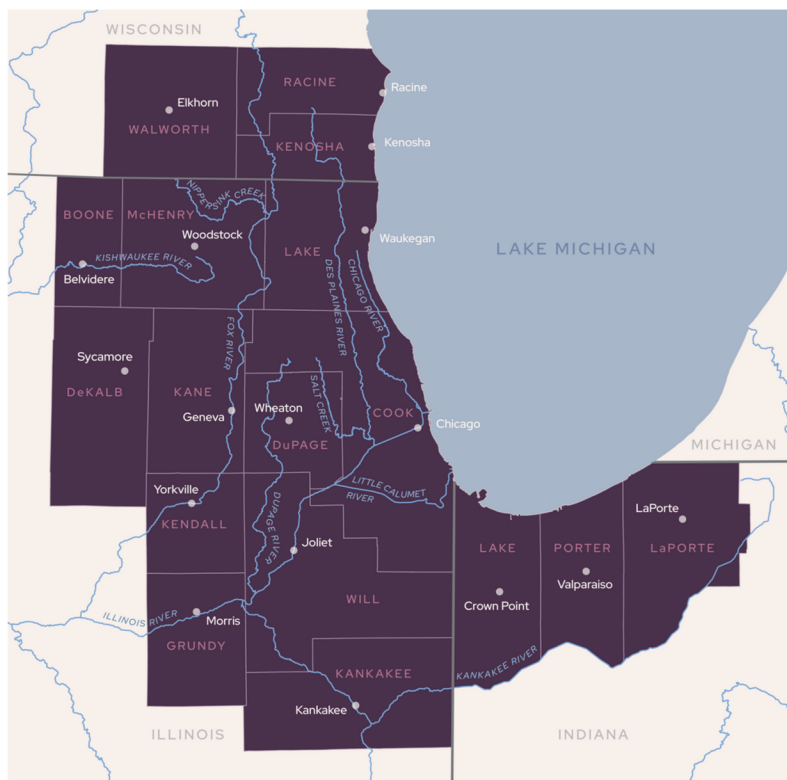
The Big Picture

The Challenge

For every acre of land protected, more than two are lost, threatening the future of our communities and natural systems.

Why it Matters

Resilient land provides clean air, safe water, and a high quality of life. As our region grows, we must act now to protect it as a public good.



By the Numbers

10 million
people

5.6 million
acres of land

17
counties

Our 2026-2030 Strategic Priorities

As we enter a period of rapid change—across government, communities, and the landscape—our land-focused strategy rises to meet the moment. Over the next five years, we will anchor our work in land as the foundation of a connected and resilient region for both people and wildlife.

This plan is organized around five mutually reinforcing priorities, each with a clear target for 2030:



PRIORITY	2030 TARGET
Land-Centered Leadership	Unlock \$150M in new state and local investment for land and water conservation
Resilient & Connected Landscapes	Conserve an additional 10,000 acres of land through protection and restoration initiatives
People & Places	Increase physical access to nature for at least 1 million residents, through policy initiatives and community programs
Conservation Innovation	Pioneer five innovative conservation solutions that address critical gaps in the region's land and water systems and can be scaled or replicated elsewhere
Organizational Excellence	Grow our combined strategic operating reserve and general endowment by 30%

