



OPENLANDER

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PHOTO: DJ GLISSON



And we're here to help.

It's late afternoon on a warm, mostly sunny July day in a neighborhood on the north side of Chicago. Two guys wearing hiking boots and carrying day packs walk up the sidewalk toward their apartment building. Their downstairs neighbor, a mother who moved with her family to Chicago from New England a few years earlier, emerges. They greet each other, and she observes, "It looks like you've been hiking."

"We have. We were down at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Will County. About an hour and change from here."

"We love hiking," she replies. "But we didn't think there was anywhere to go hiking in the Midwest."

TOO OFTEN RESIDENTS AND VISITORS to our region think of “Great Nature” as something far away, expensive to reach, or even dangerous. Fewer than one-third of Americans report that they are “very satisfied” with places for outdoor or nature recreation where they live. These attitudes are reinforced by ad campaigns that we urban, suburban, and exurban dwellers see each year encouraging us to visit Montana or Arizona, even Michigan or Wisconsin.

But dedicated organizations and agencies protect an array of great places to experience nature right here in our backyard.

Did you know that there is a canyon in Cook County?

Have you ever visited the baby bison born in a herd merely an hour from the Chicago Loop?

Did you know that you can take public transit from Chicago to a national park?

Have you watched
Osprey diving for
fish on the south side
of Chicago?

Did you know there’s a mountain biking park on Chicago’s south side?

Have you canoed or kayaked on the 500+ miles of water trails in northeast Illinois?

Have you ever explored the 575-mile Grand Illinois Trail across northern Illinois?

Did you know Starved Rock is one of the best places in the Lower 48 to see Bald Eagles?

When was the last time you visited your neighborhood park?

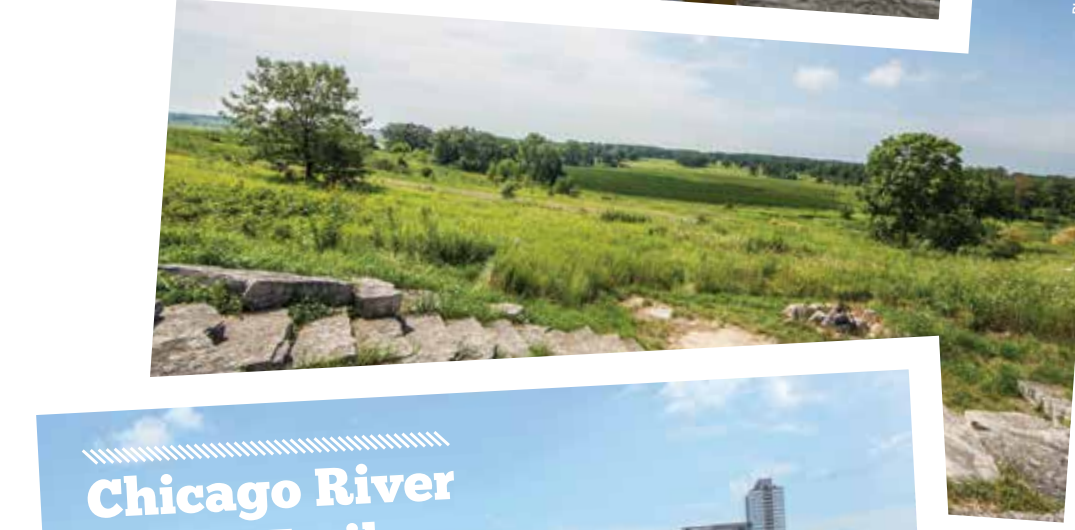
Connecting the people of our region to nature where they live is fundamental to our mission at Openlands. To further our region-wide mission, this summer we are launching the **Openlands Get Outside Map** on Openlands.org.

You can use the **Get Outside Map** to search for places to experience nature throughout our region. The map is interactive and lets you filter for sites by an array of activities from walking to hiking to cross-country skiing to birding to camping. It lets you search for places to get outside in nature that are family-friendly, that are accessible to those with different abilities, that can be reached by public transit, and that welcome pets.

The **Openlands Get Outside Map** launched in June with 350 sites to explore ranging from national and state parks to county forest preserves to natural areas in parks. The map will grow from here as we add more and more sites.

To use the **Openlands Get Outside Map**, simply navigate your browser to **Openlands.org**.

Funding for the Openlands Get Outside Map is generously provided by the Grand Victoria Foundation.



TO USE THE
**Openlands
Get Outside Map,**

SIMPLY NAVIGATE
YOUR BROWSER TO
Openlands.org

Welcome New Openlands Board Member

JAMES RACHLIN

James Rachlin has served as the President of Meristem Advisors LLC since April of 2018. Prior to that, he served as Managing Director of RBC Capital Markets, as Managing Director of BMO Capital Markets, and as Senior Vice President and Manager of Public Finance at Griffin, Kubik, Stephens & Thompson. In New York City, Rachlin served as Vice President of Prudential Securities and as Project Finance Associate at DJS/Inverness & Company. He earned his MBA in Finance from Wharton Business School, as well as a Master of Science in Engineering, Energy, and Environment from Princeton. He received his undergraduate degree in Computer Science from Brown. Rachlin has served on the Board of Old Town School of Folk Music for 11 years.

What attracts you to conservation?

I grew up my entire life birdwatching, and I’ve always been an outdoors person. When I was in my teen years, I did a lot of canoe tripping. I had to really learn to like it because I hated to carry the pack and I had to carry the canoe and I thought, “Why am I doing this?” But then I started to enjoy the absolute solitude of being miles away from anybody and to enjoy the physical exertion and the satisfaction I got from propelling myself through remarkable landscapes.

I still remember being in a tent one morning and hearing this tremendous racket, and I couldn’t imagine what it was. I thought, “I better see what this is,” and I unzipped my tent. And it was just a bird flying from a log to a branch, and from the branch to the log. And it was just that the surroundings were so quiet that the bird’s wings were like a racket to me.

With an experience like that, you begin to get an appreciation for what a pristine, preserved space is, and it makes it that much more precious to you. The importance of having it there, knowing it’s there, is what drives you to want to protect it.

What are your favorite places to get outside in our region?

We appreciate the lakefront enormously for birding. It’s the best birdwatching we’ve had, year-in and year-out. My family and I have traveled to Ohio and to Ontario to watch the migrations, and we always ask, “Why didn’t we just stay in our Chicago backyard because it’s ten times better?” You walk across the street, and it’s everything you could possibly want in migratory songbirds. We use the lakefront a ton and recognize what a remarkable resource that is.

Why is Openlands’ work important?

Connecting people to nature and each other, away from their phones, seems so hard these days. So many people never internalize the value of nature because they never venture into open spaces. So the opportunities Openlands provides to turn a kid on to nature can be life changing.



With Costs of Climate Change Rising, It’s Time to Act

ILLINOIS NEEDS TO GET SERIOUS on climate change before it hits our economy hard. California’s largest utility provider, Pacific Gas & Electric, has announced that they have literally been bankrupted by climate change. Faulty PG&E equipment has been cited as the source for many of the devastating wildfires that swept across California in 2017 and 2018, and facing an estimated \$17B–\$30B in liabilities, the company publicly announced plans to file for Chapter 11 on January 29, 2019.

Climate change is a principal factor in the intensity of those fires, and while Illinois won’t face the same threats as California, it’s only a matter of time until we are dealing with our own climate-fueled disaster. Climate change will have a different face in Illinois, and we will see the costs add up in healthcare, urban and rural flooding, crop failure, and strained infrastructure. The wrong thing to do in these instances would be to subsidize the costs, liabilities, and risks with new burdens on utility and tax payers. The right thing to do is to invest in strategies that reduce our collective risks and protect our communities from the changes we must expect.

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The reality is that we are starting to run out of time to act on climate change, so we need to transition our economy to clean energy, and just as importantly, we need to scale up strategies that help put carbon back in the ground. We must prioritize solutions that offer multiple benefits for each single investment.

Nature-based solutions to climate change are cost-effective models that simultaneously provide environmental, societal, and economic benefits

and help build climate resilience. Healthy, natural lands put carbon back in the soil, but Illinois’ Department of Natural Resources, county conservation districts, and forest preserves are starved for funding to care for their land. Money focused here would create healthier lands, provide public recreation, and build community resiliency.

Tree-lined streets and urban parks reduce both air pollution and air temperatures, together lowering the number of hospital visits, missed school days, and exorbitant energy bills. Through our Space to Grow program, for example, Openlands works in partnership with government agencies, other non-profits, and private sector entities to reduce neighborhood flooding while providing improved schoolyards and community green space. Illinois needs more thinking like this.

Land can no longer have one primary designated use, but rather must have multiple functions. We need many more public-private partnerships that provide funding, knowledge, and expertise both to implement the strategies we know will work and to pioneer new solutions that deliver multiple benefits for climate resiliency. As the PG&E example indicates, we know these costs are coming if we do nothing, and we know the actions we can take to prevent them. Gov. Pritzker has committed Illinois to the US Climate Alliance, and that’s an important start, but we need far more help if we’re going to get serious in tackling this challenge.

We invite you to learn more about Openlands’ efforts to address the climate crisis by visiting [Openlands.org/Climate](https://openlands.org/Climate).

Openlands Earns Reaccreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

OPENLANDS DOES A LOT OF THINGS. We plant trees and transform schoolyards into safe playgrounds and lush gardens. We build new trails and take families on canoe trips. And we protect the Forest Preserves and help to pass new laws to support conservation. We also are a land trust, meaning we purchase land from willing sellers and then hold it until a public agency can buy it from us, forever keeping it as open space—instead of the next big box store.

In 2018, Openlands was reaccredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Being an accredited land trust is important. It means that Openlands demonstrates sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship of the lands we protect. As an accredited land trust, we apply best practices in land protection transactions that conserve the green spaces of the Chicago Wilderness region for all to enjoy.

“When land trusts achieve and maintain accreditation, benefits flow to us all,” said Land Trust Alliance President & CEO Andrew Bowman. “Openlands is demonstrating a commitment to making its work rigorous, resilient, and relevant. I applaud Openlands and join in celebrating its renewed accreditation.”

We have been a Land Trust Alliance Member since 1983, and in 2013, Openlands was accredited for the first time by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission is an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, a national land conservation organization working to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America.



If you’re interested in protecting your land, but are unsure where to start, just email land@openlands.org. We’re here to help.

Support Us

Openlands is committed to connecting you, your friends, your family, and your neighbors to nature right here where you live. [Openlands.org/support](https://openlands.org/support)

• OPENLANDS 2019 • ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Thursday, October 31, 2019
Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Avenue
Reception at 10:30am
Luncheon at noon

The 2019 Annual Luncheon will celebrate stewardship, volunteerism, and caring for the land.

CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT: Stephen Packard
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Wendy Paulson
PRESENTING SPONSOR: The Negaunee Foundation

For sponsorship opportunities, please contact:
development@openlands.org or 312.863.6263



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