



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES

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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

**DATE:** June 24, 2019  
**MEMO TO:** Jessica Vealitzek, Chair  
Operations Committee  
John Wasik, Chair  
Planning Committee  
**FROM:** James L. Anderson  
Director of Natural Resources

**Agenda Item#** 9.7

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend approval of a Resolution supporting the Chicago Wilderness 12 Wildlife Priority Species Program which focuses protection and enhancement efforts for the following species and the habitats they depend upon: Monarch Butterfly; Blanding's Turtle; Red-Headed Woodpecker; Little Brown Bat; Rusty Patched Bumble Bee; Blue-Spotted Salamander; Smooth Green Snake; Regal Fritillary Ellipse; Henslow's Sparrow; Mottled Sculpin; Bobolink.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED:** Conservation; Leadership; Communication, Education and Outreach

**FINANCIAL DATA:** There is no additional financial impact at this time.

**BACKGROUND:** The essential lands and waters of the Chicago Wilderness Region support thousands of native species. Many of these species face multiple threats to their long-term survival. In an effort to yield measurable, relevant, robust conservation results over the next five years, Chicago Wilderness has created six Focus Areas, including the "Priority Species" Focus Area, which seeks to conserve a targeted group of animal species, improve their health and habitats, and thereby benefit our region's lands and waters. The Lake County Forest Preserve District is a "Priority Animal Species Lead Partner" in Chicago Wilderness' Priority Species program, with respect to the Blanding's Turtle.

Through the Priority Species program, District staff, Chicago Wilderness, and other partner wildlife specialists, ecologists, and social scientists have identified 12 priority animal species in the Chicago Wilderness Region. The goal of focusing on these 12 priority species is to increase the number of viable populations of native wildlife species, protect and restore habitats appropriate for the species, and enhance adaptive sustainability over the long-term. Eleven of the twelve species are known to exist in Lake County.

These efforts are expected to further benefit a large suite of fauna and flora that share similar habitat requirements and management needs. District participation with the Priority Species Focus Area increases collaboration, coordinates actions, and maximizes results from existing resources.

This program is designed to attract coordinate monitoring efforts, standardize data, track regional trends, measure successes and challenges, and build public support for nature conservation throughout the region. Supporting these species and their habitats enhances air and water quality, nurtures a multitude of wildlife populations, and preserves the last fragments of our region's globally-rare ecosystems. Within the Priority Species Focus Area Program, the District is the lead agency for Blanding's Turtles and is active with many of the other priority species.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel.



**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING  
THE CHICAGO WILDERNESS 12 WILDLIFE PRIORITY SPECIES PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, the Chicago Wilderness 12 Wildlife Priority Species Program (the “Program”) focuses protection and enhancement efforts on twelve identified, priority animal species (the “Species”) that correspond to various critical habitats across Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan; and

**WHEREAS**, under the Program, each Species is assigned a lead partner to lead the Program’s conservation efforts with respect to that Species; and

**WHEREAS**, the lead partners include Audubon Great Lakes, The Field Museum, Illinois Natural History Survey, Lake County Forest Preserve District (the “District”), Lincoln Park Zoo, The Nature Conservancy - Illinois Chapter, Openlands, Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and

**WHEREAS**, the Program is intended to support the Species and their habitats, enhance air and water quality, nurture a multitude of wildlife populations, and preserve the last fragments of our region's globally-rare ecosystems; and

**WHEREAS**, state fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies, and partners have a history of effectively developing plans to address conservation issues through joint plans and efforts, such as the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan, US Fish and Wildlife Service Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Collaborative, the District’s 100-Year Vision, and the District’s Green Infrastructure Model and Strategy; and

**WHEREAS**, as stated in its 100-Year Vision, the District will prevent species loss and allow no additional native species to disappear from Lake County; and

**WHEREAS**, as stated in its 100-Year Vision, “The District will acquire and protect, ecologically restore and adaptively manage a system of large natural areas and other open spaces connected by waterways and greenways, and will seek and facilitate projects with partners to enhance the surrounding working landscape, in order to improve the ecosystem functions and diversity of native plant and animal life found throughout Lake County and the region”; and

**WHEREAS**, the District, as part of its 100-Year Vision, will protect priority areas, create and manage large preserves, preserve more land with existing or potential benefits for biodiversity, create and manage a mosaic of wildlife habitats, and protect streams and lakes through watershed planning to conserve aquatic biodiversity; and

**WHEREAS**, eleven of the twelve Species are found in Lake County; and

**WHEREAS**, the District, as part of its 100-Year Vision, will protect globally and regionally important natural communities, restore and manage the ecological health of natural communities, and improve the scientific basis of ecological restoration and management; and

**WHEREAS**, the District, as part of its 100-Year Vision, will involve the citizens, agencies, and organizations in the region in the efforts to conserve biodiversity and develop citizen awareness and understanding of local biodiversity to ensure support and participation; and

**WHEREAS**, the District supports efforts to address threats of loss, fragmentation and modification of habitat for the 1 Species and the Program, which will provide a better understanding of Species habitat needs and how land use practices affect the distribution, occurrence and abundance of the Species;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Illinois **THAT**:

**Section 1. Recitals.** The recitals set forth above are incorporated as a part of this Resolution by this reference.

**Section 2. Support of Program.** The District hereby expresses its support of the Program. Nothing in this Resolution will be deemed to authorize the expenditure of District funds.

**Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019

\_\_\_\_\_  
Angelo D. Kyle, President  
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Gragnani, Secretary  
Lake County Forest Preserve District

Exhibit No. \_\_\_\_\_