

DUNNING READ NATURAL AREA

2025 Highlights

ABOUT THE SITE

The Dunning Read Natural Area is an approximately 21-acre area in the Dunning neighborhood of northwest Chicago. Comprising prairies, wetlands, and woodlands, the park has approximately 0.8 miles of trails and is under active restoration by the Chicago Park District. Much of that work focuses on removing invasive teasel, buckthorn, phragmites, and wild parsnip and incorporating prescribed burns to encourage new growth of native species.

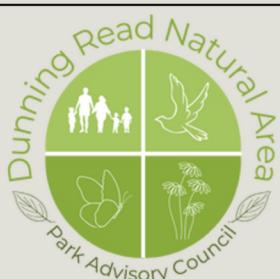
OUR MISSION

The Dunning Read Natural Area Park Advisory Council (PAC) is a volunteer group of passionate community members. The group's mission is to support the Chicago Park District in restoring and preserving this natural area to provide a quality habitat for diverse native plants and wildlife as well as opportunities for access, education, and recreation for the entire community.

WORK DAYS

Dedicated volunteers from the community come together every third Saturday of the month to help maintain the site. Work includes removing invasive species, trimming trees, clearing debris and litter, gathering native seeds, distributing mulch and celebrating the beauty of this natural urban gem.

Our volunteers represent neighbors, families, scouts, high school and college students as well as members of the DRNA PAC. All are welcome to join us.



2025 ACTIVITIES

While much of our work is concentrated on restoring and maintaining the natural area, we also aim to attract visitors to the site by creating unique programs, increasing our visibility and engaging with our community partners to provide recreational and educational activities.

Our April workday included a family friendly Easter Egg Hunt!



Participated in the 2025 City Nature Challenge where volunteers recorded observations on the DRNA site.

Partnered with Eagle Scouts to build protective boxes around the trees on the berm

Hosted an activity table at the 2025 Envirofest at Portage Park.



Invited Park District representative to discuss prescribed burns at our Annual Community Meeting

Partnered with the Dunning Library to host community bird walks

Built boot scrapers and walking sticks for site visitors to use





The Park District improved our curb appeal with a split level fence



Led a prairie crayfish safari and uploaded sightings to iNaturalist, as part of RiverWatch's Illinois Crayfish Finders program



The site shed was rejuvenated with new paint and the installation of DRNA's new logo



A \$5,000 grant from the Union Pacific Community Ties local grant program enabled us to plant, mulch & cage over 70 native trees and shrubs



Over 30 volunteers participated in the native planting day and made an impact on preserving the ecosystem



The native planting day included a tree-planting presentation by Tree Keeper, Jeff Daube



Began uploading milkweed and monarch sightings as part of the Chicago Botanic Garden's BudBurst initiative



Installed a temporary bison sculpture at the DRNA to celebrate National Bison Day



Participated in Nature Night at the Dunning Library





The DRNA Park Advisory Council is grateful to all of our volunteers, our community partners and the Chicago Park District for supporting our efforts.



Visit us:

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