

## Governor Quinn Announces Investments to Continue Developing Millennium Reserve

Written by Richard Martin  
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More Than \$6 Million in State and Local Partnership Investments to Help Create the Largest Open Space Project in the Country

CHICAGO – March 1, 2013. Governor Pat Quinn today took another major step towards revitalizing Chicago’s Calumet region by announcing \$6.8 in state and local investments to continue developing the Millennium Reserve, a 140,000-acre project to create the largest open space area in the country. The governor also signed an Executive Order creating a steering committee made up of federal, state and local partners that will oversee the vision for the reserve. Making the Millennium Reserve a reality is part of the governor’s ongoing commitment to protecting Illinois’ natural resources, creating jobs and strengthening communities.

“These key investments, along with the creation of the steering committee, will help us continue to create the Millennium Reserve and connect our Calumet communities through trails and green space,” Governor Quinn said. “By creating the largest open space project in the country, we are giving more children an opportunity to experience the great outdoors and continuing to make Illinois one of the nation’s greenest states.”

The Millennium Reserve Steering Committee will submit a preliminary report to the governor within six months of its first meeting, and will provide regular reports every six months thereafter. The steering committee will identify specific projects of regional significance, recommend major policy initiatives that could be pursued by the state of Illinois and partner organizations, and identify potential funding sources for projects within the Millennium Reserve.

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"I want to thank Governor Quinn for creating the steering committee, and I look forward to helping him continue to help move this first-of-its-kind project forward," said John Rogner, who directs landscape conservation activities for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and will serve as chair of the steering committee. "Illinois' Millennium Reserve initiative will serve as a national model not only for the preservation and expansion of green space, but also for increasing outdoor recreation in urban communities."

"Americans spent more than \$145 billion dollars in 2011 on outdoor recreation, including bird watching, hiking and fishing," Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Marc Miller said. "Investments like these in open space projects and outdoor recreation make a lot of sense. The Calumet area of Chicago is home to some of Illinois' richest biodiversity, with a wide variety of wildlife and plant species in the midst of an urban environment. In the Millennium Reserve, we are following Mother Nature's course, and creating a destination for all Illinoisans and the 53 million tourists who visit the Chicago area every year."

Standing inside the newly-constructed visitor center at William W. Powers State Recreation Area on Chicago's South Side, Governor Quinn today announced the following investments within the Millennium Reserve boundaries:

**Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grants** - The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has been awarded two federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants for work that will benefit the environment and the economy of Millennium Reserve. Nearly \$400,000 is being invested for Greencorps Chicago (GC), which is the city of Chicago's green jobs training program. GC will work on invasive species control at 15 sites in the Millennium Reserve. An additional \$300,000 will support the expansion of green infrastructure projects in seven suburban communities.

**Chicago Park District Projects** - Using federal funding from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the IDNR is investing \$200,000 in the Chicago Park District's efforts to improve two recent land acquisitions within the Millennium Reserve.

**Recreational investments** - The state of Illinois is using more than \$5 million in federal grant funding to invest in recreation opportunities within the Millennium Reserve. \$4.7 million from the

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federally-funded Illinois Transportation Enhancements Program (ITEP) will be used by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to construct new links in the Cal-Sag Trail and the Thorn Creek Trail. Another \$600,000 in federal Coastal Zone Management Program funding is being invested in expanding fishing opportunities for youth in the region.

William W. Powers Visitor Center - A \$900,000 capital investment is being used to complete the new visitor center at William W. Powers State Recreation Area, due to open later this year. The exciting, contemporary facility will orient visitors to the state recreation area on Chicago's South Side with exhibits engaging adults and children with the natural features and historical significance of Wolf Lake. Public meeting space within the visitor center building will be available for use by groups and partners in the Calumet Region.

The Millennium Reserve: Calumet Core initiative is built upon strong partnerships, community planning, and the work of active citizens and organizations who have sought to transform an economically-challenged industrial region into a re-envisioned community landscape that is economically, environmentally and culturally vital to the region. The project is part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative to reconnect Americans, especially children, to America's rich outdoor treasures; build upon public and private priorities for conservation and recreation lands; and use science-based management practices to restore and protect our lands and waters for future generations.

For more information on the Millennium Reserve Initiative visit <http://millenniumreserve.illinois.gov>

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