



**CHICAGO AUDUBON
SOCIETY**

5801-C N. Pulaski Road | Chicago, IL 60646-6057

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**Chicago Park District
541 N. Fairbanks Court
Chicago, IL 60611**

November 15th, 2019

Dear President LaVelle, Vice President Helfand, General Superintendent Kelly and Commissioners,

Thank you for your attention and response to our previous letter regarding the Montrose Beach and Recreation Area and its importance to conservation, community groups and residents of Chicago. Your continued efforts to create a beautiful city through the over 600 parks, beaches, pools, museums, conservatories, lagoons and wildlife gardens help make Chicago one of the best cities in the world and one of the reasons people choose to live and thrive here.

On behalf of these several local, regional and national organizations as well as thousands of Chicago residents, our birding organizations respectfully request that the Chicago Park District (CPD) convene a group of stakeholders to develop a policy regarding the parameters of large events at Montrose Beach and Recreation Area, and that this group include a representative of our organizations.

As you know, the Montrose area is an important refuge for local and migratory birds. Due to its location on the lake front, the birds themselves have chosen this specific area as an important place for nesting as well as a migration stop-over. Under CPD's watch, the Montrose area has been well managed to support endangered native plants and this area has become increasingly important to many species. In fact, it is a rare ecosystem in a fast changing world where habitat loss and climate change have taken a critical toll. National Audubon recently released their report *Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink* detailing the pressing threat of climate change, habitat loss, and agricultural/yard chemicals to bird species estimating a loss of approximately one third of birds in North America.



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The use of Montrose as a nesting location for the endangered Piping Plover this year highlighted the success of CPD and conservationists in managing this area. Close to 200 people organized to help protect the plovers and educate the public about them this summer. Many stories were written about the plovers nesting there and the stories continue, following the birds on their migration and winter nesting. A documentary was created about the plovers. Now Governor Pritzker is declaring November 18th ‘Piping Plover Day.’

We believe this is the right time to come together to create a policy for this small but very important space. We see this as a great opportunity for CPD and Chicago to be an example to the world of how we can work together to address climate change and create spaces that positively address our continuing crises.

For many people, just knowing that this beautiful green space exists for birds, wildlife and plants gives them hope that we can succeed in living on this planet together with nature.

There are many beautiful places in the city for concerts and events. Chicago birding organizations ask that we collaborate with CPD to develop a policy for Montrose that helps to preserve this precious resource for all of us and for future generations to come.

We hope you see this as a unique and important opportunity and we look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Judy Pollock, President
Chicago Audubon Society

Carl Giometti, President
Chicago Ornithological Society

Matthew Cvetas, President
Illinois Ornithological Society



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cc: Mayor Lori Lightfoot
Alderman James Capplemann
Chief Operating Officer Pat Levar
Dana Zilinski/Dennis Meunier, CPD Department of Revenue
Juliet Azimi, Chief Administrative Officer, CPD
Cathy Breitenbach, CPD Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
Louise Clemency, US Fish and Wildlife Services
Brad Semel, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Montrose Lakefront Coalition

Supporters:

Illinois Environmental Council Jennifer Walling, Executive Director

Friends of the Parks  Juanita Irizarry, Executive Director

Sierra Club Chicago Group Christine Williamson, Chair, Land Wildlife and Habitat Team

Friends of the Chicago River  Margaret Frisbie, Executive Director

Lake County Audubon Society  Emma England, President

Bird Conservation Network  Terry Schilling, President

Illinois Audubon Society  Jim Herkert, Executive Director