

# Protect, Preserve and Expand our Green Legacy: Kankakee Sands



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## KANKAKEE SANDS

This Burnham Plan Centennial Green Legacy Project has helped enhance local pride in a bi-state region that contains one of the rarest ecosystems on earth – the landscapes at the south end of Lake Michigan where sand and water shifted through the millennia to create rich environments for nature and wildlife. Tens of thousands of acres of sand prairie, savanna and marsh lands originally comprised the Kankakee Sands region, which spans the Indiana–Illinois border and generally follows the Kankakee River. With most of the marsh lands drained and land cultivated, the sand prairie, savanna and marsh ecosystems have become rare and fragmented.

While most of the Grand Marsh has been lost, the black oak savanna landscape survives and contains the largest concentration of high-quality sand savannas in the United States. This is the kind of regionally significant open space that the Green Legacy initiative seeks to preserve. The Nature Conservancy, other conservation organizations and the two state governments are pursuing a long-term program for prairie and marsh protection and restoration. More than 7,000 acres in Kankakee Sands have now been protected. The Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve of 68 acres was officially dedicated on April 28, 2009. On May 16, 2009 the Nature Conservancy and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission celebrated the site's dedication as part of the Burnham Plan Centennial.

## REGIONAL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

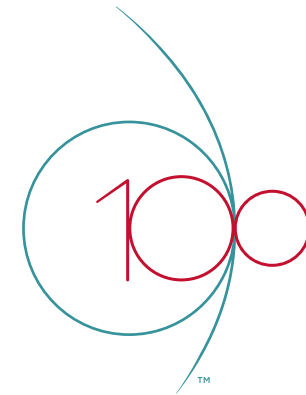
Our region's communities are connected through a network of open spaces and natural areas — greenways and trails, wetlands, parks and forest preserves — from southeastern Wisconsin through Illinois to northwestern Indiana.

A century ago, Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett unveiled their Plan of Chicago, a framework for growth in the greater Chicago area. Their vision included a network of forest preserve districts, open spaces and trails that laid the foundation for the green infrastructure that so enriches the quality of life in our three-state Chicago metropolis.

## GREEN LEGACY PROJECTS

One of the priority goals of the Burnham Plan Centennial is to make real progress in closing important gaps in the region's green infrastructure, and to build momentum for creating the nation's greenest region during the next 100 years. Across the metropolitan area, the Burnham Plan Centennial and the nonprofit organization Openlands have identified more than 20 "Green Legacy" projects that close some of these critical gaps. When completed, these projects will help to:

- Complete Our Region's Trail System
- Connect Us to Our Rivers and Streams
- Expand Neighborhood Green Space
- Protect Our Shoreline
- Preserve Regionally Significant Open Space



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The Kankakee Sands partners include The Nature Conservancy, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. All of the Burnham Plan Centennial Green Legacy Projects build on many years of hard work by civic organizations, community residents, foundations and government. They are the enduring legacy of Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago, are critical to the long-term health of the region, and serve as catalysts for improving our quality of life over the next 100 years.

For more information about the Burnham Plan Centennial and its Green Legacy Projects visit

[burnhamplan100.org](http://burnhamplan100.org)

# BURNHAM PLAN CENTENNIAL GREEN LEGACY PROJECTS

- **COMPLETE OUR REGION'S TRAIL SYSTEM**
    - Burnham Greenway
    - Calumet-Sag Trail
    - Fox River Trail
    - Kankakee Riverfront Trail
    - Marquette Greenway Trail
    - Old Plank Road Trail
  - **CONNECT US TO OUR RIVERS AND STREAMS**
    - Chicago Riverwalk
    - Little Calumet River Water Trail
  - **EXPAND NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN SPACE**
    - Bloomington Trail
    - Englewood New ERA Trail
  - **PROTECT OUR SHORELINE**
    - Lake Michigan Water Trail
    - Last 4 Miles
    - Marquette Plan
    - Openlands Lakeshore Preserve
    - Waukegan Lakefront
  - **PRESERVE OPEN SPACE**
    - Calumet Open Space Reserve
    - Deer Grove Preserve
    - Hack-ma-tack Reserve
    - Kankakee Sands
    - Lockport-Joliet Heritage Park
    - Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie
    - Rock Run Greenway
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- Existing and Proposed Trails
  - Water Trails
  - Green Infrastructure

