

# Burnham Wildlife Corridor Gathering Spaces

**Along Chicago's South Lakefront**



Photographs by Sandra Steinbrecher

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**“The modern naturalist must realize that in some of its branches his profession, while more than ever a science, has also become an art.” — Theodore Roosevelt**

Wandering along the wood-chipped paths of the Burnham Wildlife Corridor (BWC), visitors encounter native plants and wildlife in a variety of natural ecosystems. Unexpectedly, something unique emerges from the landscape: a spiral table, a ring of interlocking butterfly wings, a philosopher's stone, a collection of woven willow forms, a painted bird with mosaic wings. These are the Burnham Wildlife Corridor Gathering Spaces, a series of artistic installations interspersed throughout the BWC that reflect the nature and culture of the area and serve as assembly grounds, resting areas, and places of contemplation.

The project is the result of a collaboration among the Chicago Park District, The Field Museum and community partners to improve the quality of life for Chicago residents through deepening connections to nature in the city. The five Gathering Spaces were designed, created, and activated by teams of local artists and community-based organizations from the nearby neighborhoods of Bronzeville, Chinatown, and Pilsen. The spaces pay homage to and respect






their surroundings by utilizing natural materials such as wood, stone, and native plants.

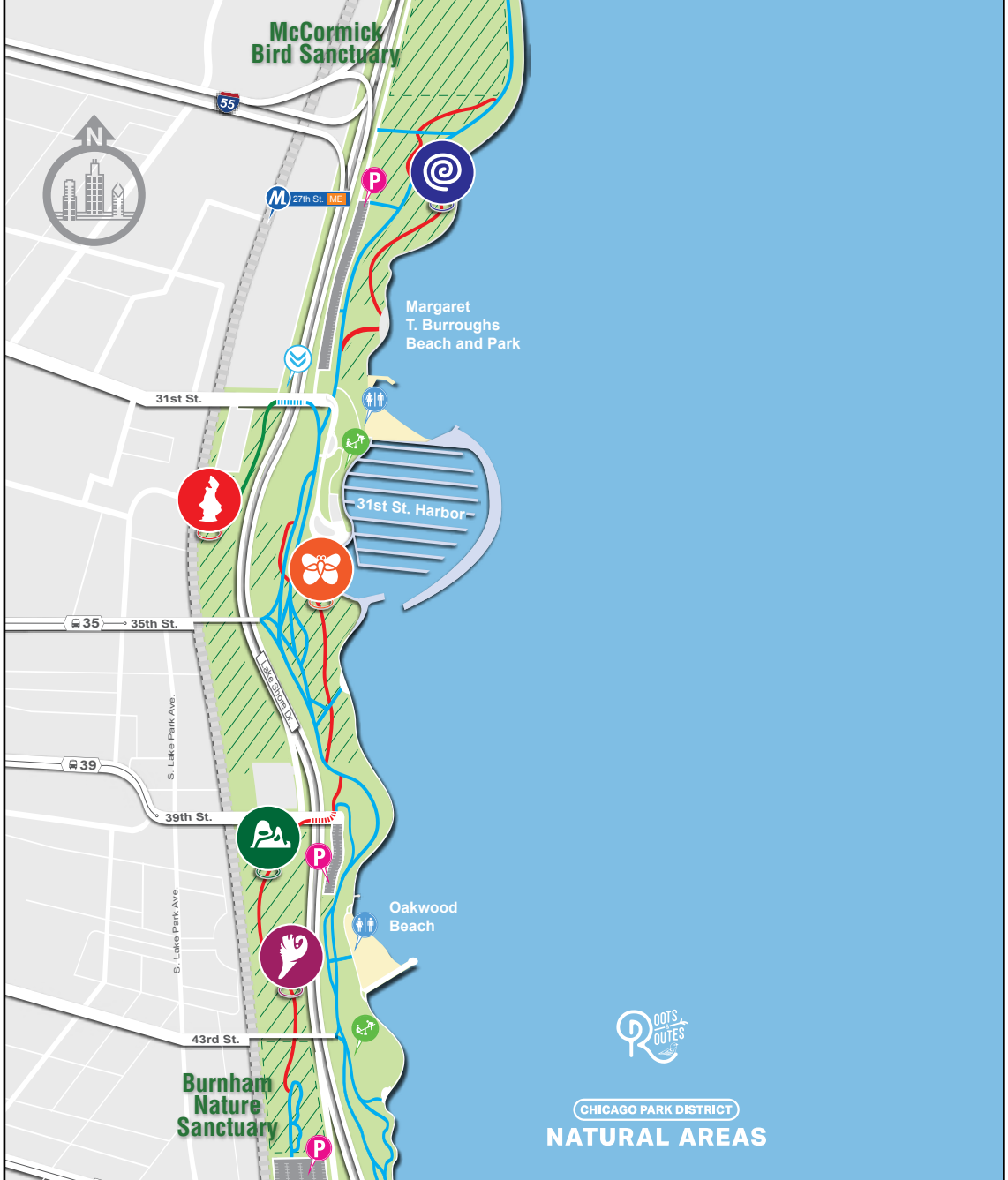
A 100-acre ribbon of meandering urban wilderness, the BWC is the longest and largest expanse of Chicago Park District Natural Area along Chicago's south lakefront. It stretches from McCormick Place on the north to 47th Street on the south. The BWC's native ecosystems—including prairie, savanna, and woodland—provide healthy, diverse habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife and offer opportunities for visitors to connect to the natural world.

The success of the Gathering Spaces is palpable, measured in the collective energy of the partners in this artistic and socially responsive placemaking effort. Going forward, activation of the Gathering Spaces through opportunities that celebrate the ecological context and cultural significance of the Burnham Wildlife Corridor will shape its legacy.

The Gathering Spaces were designed and created over a period of two years. They were photographed by Sandra Steinbrecher between March and June 2016.

# Map of Burnham Wildlife Corridor Gathering Spaces

- 
**Caracol**  
 East of Lake Shore Drive at 26th Street
- 
**La Ronda Parakata**  
 East of Lake Shore Drive at 34th Street
- 
**Set in Stone**  
 West of Lake Shore Drive at 33rd Street
- 
**Sounding Bronzeville**  
 West of Lake Shore Drive at 40th Street
- 
**Sankofa for the Earth**  
 West of Lake Shore Drive at 42nd Street





## Sounding Bronzeville

This site includes several organic sculptural forms woven from native willow branches that rise from the ground in different heights and shapes. Some of these forms serve as seating, and some have “sound ports” or “nesting ports”. These openings allow for visibility through the forms as well as opportunities for specific auidal experiences between people and the natural space. This piece commemorates and remembers the strength and resilience of thousands of African Americans who made the journey from the South seeking better opportunities North during the Great Migration.

### Lead artists

Fo Wilson, Norman Teague, and Chris Buchakjian

Architects:

Monica Chadha and Mike Newman

Landscape Architects:

Nilay Mistry and Nathan Wright

Willow Furniture Maker and Consultant:

Dave Chapman

### Community Partner

Bronzeville Community Development Partnership  
(Bronzeville)









## BWC Partners

**The Chicago Park District's** mission is to enhance the quality of life in Chicago as the leading provider of recreation and leisure opportunities; to provide safe, inviting, and beautifully maintained parks and facilities, and to create a customer-focused and responsive park system that prioritizes the needs of children and families.

**The Field Museum** fuels a journey of discovery across time to enable solutions for a brighter future rich in nature and culture.

**Roots and Routes** is a collaborative project aimed at creating and sustaining the longest stretch of lakefront natural area within the Chicago Park District system, the Burnham Wildlife Corridor, in order to maximize benefits for neighboring communities and nature.



**The South Side Community Art Center** preserves, conserves, and promotes the legacy and future of African American art and artists, while educating the community on the value of art and culture. Located in Bronzeville, the facility is the oldest African American art center in the country.

**The Chinese-American Museum** promotes the culture and history of Chinese-Americans in the Midwest through exhibitions, education and research.

**Contratiempo** preserves and highlights the cultural identity and contributions of the Spanish-speaking Latino population in the United States.

**Casa Michoacán** promotes cultural, social, and sporting activities with the Mexican immigrant community, specifically from the western central state of Michoacán, with a transnational vision.

**The Bronzeville Community Development Partnership** focuses on information technology, heritage tourism, hospitality workforce development as well as training, preservation and sustainability in Bronzeville.

## Acknowledgments

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### Chicago Park District

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Cultural and Natural Resources

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Cultural and Natural Resources

Michael Dimitroff, Manager of Art Initiatives,  
Cultural and Natural Resources

To support the Burnham Wildlife Corridor,  
visit the Chicago Parks Foundation, the Field  
Museum and the Chicago Park District websites.

### The Field Museum

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Keller Science Action Center

Jacob Campbell, Environmental Social Scientist,  
Keller Science Action Center

Asia Castaneda, Community Environmental Engage-  
ment Coordinator, Keller Science Action Center

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Tess Landon

The Gathering Spaces Curatorial Committee

Amber M. Castaneda, video documentation  
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