

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION ACTIVITY BURNHAM WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Users of this tool can begin to identify the Burnham Wildlife Corridor as a site of urban resilience to climate change, which provides critical habitat, enhances community wellbeing and promotes conservation among the general public.

Participants will learn to observe and identify distinct species of prairie and woodland habitats, and outline the importance of urban natural environments for plant and animal communities (particularly native and migratory species).

This activity was developed from the Green Ambassadors teen program. The youth in this program found that Rapid Color Guides, which help people put names to species, proved to be a powerful way for them to connect to the natural environment.

See other Rapid Color Guides for the Chicago Region at:
<http://fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org/>

WHAT IS A RAPID COLOR GUIDE?

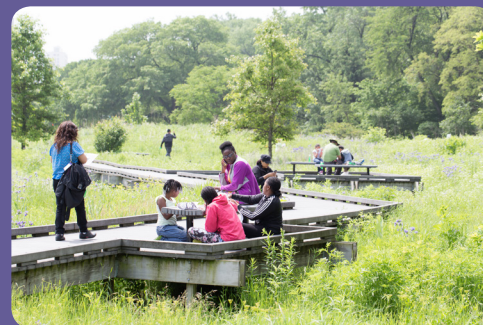
Introduction

The Burnham Wildlife Corridor Species Identification Activity provides participants with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the species found living within the prairie and woodland habitat at the Burnham Wildlife Corridor. Participants inventory plants, animals, and insects by comparing what they observe around the Corridor to images on the *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Rapid Color Guide*. Once participants identify a species, they check it off on the *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Species Checklist* and/or use a notebook to record their observations about it. A reflection period follows during which participants discuss what they learned and the facilitator helps connect this activity to the larger context of climate action and the importance of natural areas. Participants who enjoy using the Rapid Color Guide can design their own using a template available through the following link:

<http://fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org>

The *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Rapid Color Guide* is designed for use within the Burnham Wildlife Corridor. This Rapid Color Guide provides one or two photos per species (from early or late summer). Species may look different at different times of year. Users may want to look up images of species and make their own guide for the season during which the activity will take place. Use the accompanying *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Species Checklist* or a notebook to write down today's observations, and note past sightings. The checklist is alphabetical by common name and organized by popular taxonomic groupings- i.e. flowers (forbs), grasses and birds- all for ease of use by non-expert.

A Rapid Color Guide is a field identification tool that allows you to quickly identify species using color photographs. The Burnham Wildlife Corridor Color Guide is designed for identifying species of prairie and woodland habitats within this particular location. If you are interested in a more general guide to urban natural areas within prairie and oak savanna habitats, you can use the *Chicago Park District Prairies and Savannas Rapid Color Guide* and activity instructions. To access these resources, go to: <http://climatechicago.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/CPD%20Prairies%20and%20Savannas.pdf>



The Burnham Wildlife Corridor is a 100-acre ribbon of urban wilderness running through the lakefront Burnham Park. Within the Corridor is a natural area called the **Burnham Nature Sanctuary**, which is 12.5 acres and consists of a butterfly meadow, preserved

woodland, and a mature prairie. This activity works best at the Burnham Nature Sanctuary but can be used throughout the Corridor. The Sanctuary has an entrance at E 47th and S. Cornell, and visitors can follow a paved trail which loops back north of 45th Street and includes an elevated boardwalk.

1 GET READY!

Materials:

1. *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Rapid Color Guide*- We encourage you to reuse the Burnham Wildlife Corridor Rapid Color Guide by laminating the guide and/or instructing participants to mark on the accompanying checklist, rather than on the guide itself.
2. *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Species Checklist* or a notebook for recording observations
3. Pencils/pens for participants
4. Sheets of paper for the reflection (optional)
5. Clipboards (optional)
6. Prizes (optional)

THE ACTIVITY

Time:

- Introduction- 15 to 20 minutes
- Identification- 15 to 30 minutes
- Reflection and Assessment- 15 to 20 minutes
- Total: A little over an hour

Number of People: A few people to a large group

Procedure:

1. Provide participants with a clipboard, pen or pencil, Burnham Wildlife Corridor Rapid Color Guide and Species Checklist and/or notebooks for observations.
2. Describe the identification activity as a way for participants to explore the Corridor and learn about native species through the use of a field guide and checklist.
3. Introduce the *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Rapid Color Guide* as a color-image identification guide. It allows users to rapidly inventory their species observations and add them to the *Burnham Wildlife Corridor Species Checklist* or write them down in their notebooks.
4. Instruct participants that they have 15-30 minutes to walk through the Corridor for the activity, and that they should stay on the paths and boardwalks at all times.
5. Remind participants to explore within a safe distance of the home base (depending on age). If there are not enough color guides, clipboards, or chaperones, participants can group together to share.
6. After the allotted time, collect participants back together. Check in with participants about what species they found, and how many.
7. Provide prizes to participants who return having checked off the most species on their lists (optional).
8. Facilitate participants in sharing what they learned and connect this learning to climate action by asking the guiding questions.

Skills learned through this Activity: Using a field guide to identify species, recognizing distinct physiological features of species, gaining familiarity with basic taxonomic groups

REFLECTION

Goal: Helping participants solidify their knowledge and make connections to climate action, and connect to and understand the importance of natural areas.

Procedure: Have participants reconvene after completing the identification activity to reflect on what they have learned as well as share their feedback. The facilitator can ask participants the guiding questions to begin a discussion about how this activity connects to larger concepts such as urban wellbeing, biodiversity, and climate action. The last guiding question asks participants to share their personal experience of this activity.

Guiding Questions:

1. How do natural areas provide benefits for all urban inhabitants- including humans, animals, plants and insects? *Examples:* Increases people's awareness of native species of the Chicago Region and interest in conservation
2. How do natural areas in cities increase awareness of biodiversity and of the local impacts of climate change? *Examples:* Natural areas provide a space for communities to take climate action, through conservation education, stewardship. They can be a platform for communities to connect cultural heritage to climate change adaptation.
3. Did you like this activity, and why? What aspect did you find the most interesting? Would you want to return to this natural area? With whom could you share what you learned today?



Prairies are complex ecosystems dominated by grasses and other non-woody plants called forbs. Prairies are crucial and endangered habitats in the Midwest- of the 22 million acres of native prairies that once covered the state of Illinois, less than 1% are still present today. 🌱 You can contribute to prairie restoration through planting native prairie species in your backyard, and by participating in stewardship events in parks like the Burnham Wildlife Corridor!

Vocabulary:

Native Species- species which are not introduced by humans, and are naturally occurring and adapted to a particular ecosystem or habitat.

Community wellbeing- the health of a community, which involves factors such as strong social ties, connection to cultural heritage, and access to green spaces.

Additional Resources:

Chicago's Climate Action Plan:

www.chicagoclimataction.org

Information on Illinois prairies:

<http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/prairie>

Burnham Nature Sanctuary Website:

<http://www.hydepark.org/parks/burnham/burnhamnatctr.htm>

City of Chicago Nature Areas Directory (2009): Page 37

<http://www.csu.edu/cerc/researchreports/documents>

Native plants for your garden:

climatechicago.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/Native%20Plant%20List.pdf

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climatechicago.fieldmuseum.org

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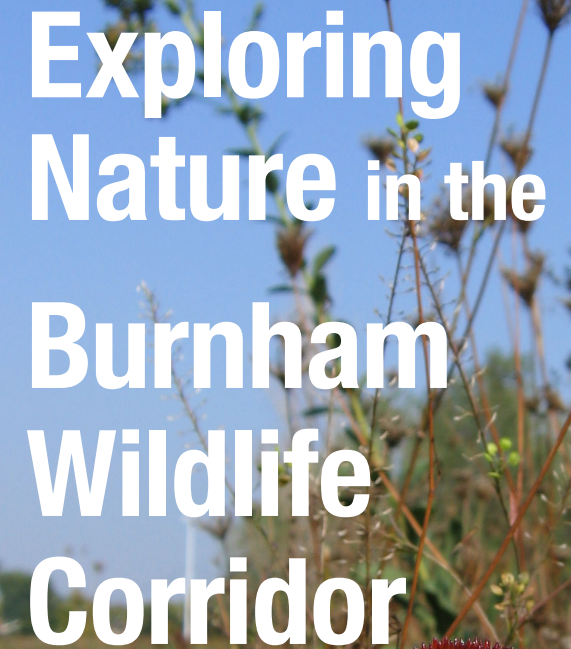
MAMMALS

COYOTE		
EASTERN COTTONTAIL		
EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL		
FOX SQUIRREL		
LITTLE BROWN BAT		
MEADOW VOLE		
RACCOON		
VIRGINIA OPOSSUM		

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

**CHICAGO COMMUNITY
CLIMATE ACTION TOOLKIT**
climatechicago.fieldmuseum.org



Exploring Nature in the Burnham Wildlife Corridor

The **Field**
Museum

1400 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60605-2496

PLANTS

	Seen today	Seen before
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TREES & SHRUBS

BLACK LOCUST		
BUR OAK		
CHINKAPIN OAK		
COMMON BUCKTHORN		
ELDERBERRY		
HACKBERRY		
HONEYLOCUST		
KENTUCKY COFFEE TREE		
NORTHERN RED OAK		
SERVICEBERRY		
STAGHORN SUMAC		
WHITE MULBERRY		
WHITE OAK		
WITCHHAZEL FLOWER		
WITCHHAZEL LEAF		

GRASSES

BOTTLEBRUSH GRASS		
CANADA WILD RYE		
CORDGRASS		
LITTLE BLUESTEM		
VIRGINIA WILD RYE		
WOODLAND BROME		

FLOWERS (FORBS)

BEE BALM		
BLACK-EYED SUSAN		
BLUE Vervain		
BUTTERFLY WEED		
COMMON MILKWEED		
CULVER'S ROOT		
CUPPLANT		

	Seen today	Seen before
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FLOWERS (FORBS CON'T.)

FOXGLOVE BEARD-TONGUE		
GOLDEN ALEXANDER		
GRAY-HEAD CONEFLOWER		
MOUNTAIN MINT		
NEW ENGLAND ASTER		
OHIO SPIDERWORT		
PALE PURPLE CONEFLOWER		
PARTRIDGE PEA		
PRAIRIE DOCK		
PURPLE CONEFLOWER		
PURPLE PRAIRIE CLOVER		
RATTLESNAKE MASTER		
ROSWINEED		
ROUGH BLAZING STAR		
SHOOTING STAR		
SHOWY GOLDENROD		
TALL GOLDENROD		
WHITE PRAIRE CLOVER		
WILD COLUMBINE		

BIRDS

AMERICAN CROW		
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH		
AMERICAN ROBIN		
BALTIMORE ORIOLE		
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE		
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD		
COMMON GRACKLE		
COMMON YELLOWTHROAT		
COOPER'S HAWK		

	Seen today	Seen before
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(BIRDS CON'T.)

EUROPEAN STARLING		
GRAY CATBIRD		
HOUSE SPARROW		
INDIGO BUNTING		
NORTHERN CARDINAL		
NORTHERN FLICKER		
RED-TAILED HAWK		
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD		
RING-BILLED GULL		
ROCK PIGEON		
SONG SPARROW		

BUTTERFLIES

BLACK SWALLOWTAIL		
CABBAGE WHITE		
COMMON BUCKEYE		
EASTERN COMMA		
EASTERN TAILED BLUE		
EASTERN TIGER SWALLOWTAIL		
MONARCH		
PAINTED LADY		
QUESTION MARK		
RED ADMIRAL		
RED SPOTTED PURPLE		
VICEROY		