

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?

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>

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.



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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PLANTS

Seen today Seen before

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

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 PRAIRIE 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

(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