

## Friends of the Chicago River



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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Fly into Bat Week by Helping our Nocturnal Pals and the Planet*

**CHICAGO (October 24, 2016)** – Just in time for Halloween, Bat Week (October 24-31, 2016) kicks off today, highlighting the many ways these furry nocturnal flyers benefit the ecosystem. By feeding on common agricultural pests and other insects, bats are a farmer’s best friend. They also play a critical role in plant pollination and seed dispersal. They’re good for the planet, the economy, *and* the diversity of our local flora.

“Bats are facing some serious threats, such as invasive plants, lack of available habitat, and white-nose syndrome,” says Margaret Frisbie, executive director of Friends of the Chicago River. “In 2015, Northern Long-eared bats were also listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Now more than ever, it’s crucial to help them out.”

Friends of the Chicago River is supporting bats and their successful reproduction by installing bat maternity colonies at river-edge forest preserves in Cook County and by partnering with the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Friends of the Forest Preserves, The Field Museum, and the Chicago Ornithological Society to restore nine river-edge preserves. These wildlife restoration areas also offer hands-on ways for everyone to get involved.

Friends of the Chicago River is encouraging people to join our upcoming restoration workdays throughout the Forest Preserves of Cook County. By getting rid of harmful invasive plants and restoring bat-friendly native varieties, we can keep these vulnerable critters—and our local environment—healthy and thriving. This Sunday, October 30, from 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., volunteers are invited to LaBagh Woods to be a part of river and forest revitalization efforts that help river-dependent species like bats survive.

For more information about fall and winter volunteer workdays:

<http://www.chicagoriver.org/events/tagged/Centennial%20Volunteer>

Friends has long recognized the ecological value of bats and the need for increased habitat in Illinois. Since 2015, we've been installing colonies that can house thousands of mother and baby bats. To read more about these efforts, please visit <http://www.chicagoriver.org/programs/on-the-ground-projects/wildlife-habitat#Bats>.

Founded in 1979, Friends of the Chicago River is an award winning nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve and protect the Chicago River for people, plants, and animals. With over 6,000 members, volunteers, and online advocates, Friends works to make the river greener and more accessible, while building awareness of the benefits that a clean, healthy river can bring to communities across the watershed. Friends of the Chicago River is working to make the Chicago River one of the world's greatest metropolitan rivers. For more information on Friends of the Chicago River, please visit our website: [www.chicagoriver.org](http://www.chicagoriver.org).