



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

Chicago Park District

Jessica Maxey-Faulkner

312.742.4786

jessica.maxey-faulkner@chicagoparkdistrict.com

MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT ANNOUNCE CALUMET BIKE PARK AT BIG MARSH

*Project to transform old industrial property into an eco-friendly recreation
and habitat restoration to be completed in the fall of 2015*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Alderman John Pope and Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael P. Kelly today announced plans to create Calumet Bike Park at Big Marsh by transforming 278 acres of old industrial property into an eco-recreation and habitat restoration on the southeast side of Chicago.

"This industrial site will soon be transformed into a unique recreational oasis that will allow families and children from neighborhoods across Chicago to bike, hike, fish, canoe and learn about nature," said Mayor Emanuel. "Whether it is creating an urban oasis on Northerly Island, embarking on a 22-acre conversion of a superfund site to a park at the Big Park in Little Village or adding nearly 1,000 acres of new park space in the City over the past three years, we're building a new Chicago that stays true to our motto as a great City in a Garden."

Formerly the site of an industrial property, the area will be redeveloped into a safe, open and inviting park space for Chicago and the neighboring communities to the south. Natural habitat areas will be enhanced to improve their ecological quality and function. Nearly 45 acres will be developed for eco-recreation opportunities including fishing, canoeing, hiking, adventure courses and off-road biking. The eco-recreation elements will be located primarily on existing slag fields where plants have a hard time growing and successful habitat creation is unlikely. Other acreage will be reserved for nature education programming.

"The Calumet Bike Park will give families a place to be active and help preserve our natural environment," Governor Quinn said. "This investment will repurpose a former industrial site to create a safe, inviting park where the community can come together and enjoy a healthy lifestyle."

"This park is a wonderful opportunity to take unused property and create a destination for local residents and others to enjoy recreational opportunities including, walking, biking and fishing," said

Alderman John Pope. "This type of site would normally be found in a more rural setting, and highlights Chicago's southeast side."

The project will include a bike park designed for all ages and skill levels and will be the first of its kind in the Midwest. It will be modeled after the highly successful Valmont Bike Park in Boulder, Colorado, which opened in 2011 and attracts an average of 500 cyclists a day in the summer. Features of the bike park will include a single track bike trail, cycle-cross course, slope-style course, pump park, dirt jump trail, dual slalom course, short-track course, gravity flow trail and a bicycle skills area.

"As Chicago's last frontier only 30 minutes from downtown, this new park will be the perfect destination for those looking to get connected with adventure and nature recreation," said Superintendent Kelly.

The project will be completed in phases; the first phase of construction will focus on bringing eco-recreation and habitat creation to the southern section of the property. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall and it is estimated to be completed in the fall of 2015. The total cost of the first phase will be \$5.5 million, paid for by a mix of private, state and Park District funding. To view a video about the project, click [HERE](#).

"The Big Marsh Bike Park is a wonderful project that transforms abandoned industrial sites and vacant properties into much needed exercise and recreational facilities for nearby communities," said Congresswoman Kelly. "I'd like to thank Mayor Emanuel for investing in this project, which I believe will greatly enhance the quality of life for residents in the Lake Calumet area and make it a prime recreational destination for the region."

The redevelopment of this former industrial site into a park is part of Mayor Emanuel's initiative to invest in parks, playgrounds and recreational spaces throughout the City; in the past three years, nearly 1,000 acres of new park space has been created in Chicago. Calumet Bike Park at Big Marsh was developed with community residents' input gathered at numerous public meetings and is part of the Millennium Reserve Initiative.

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For more information about the Chicago Park District's more than 8,100 acres of parkland, more than 580 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, nine museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY.

Photo Caption: Mayor Emanuel, Chicago Park District Announce Calumet Bike Park At Big Marsh

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