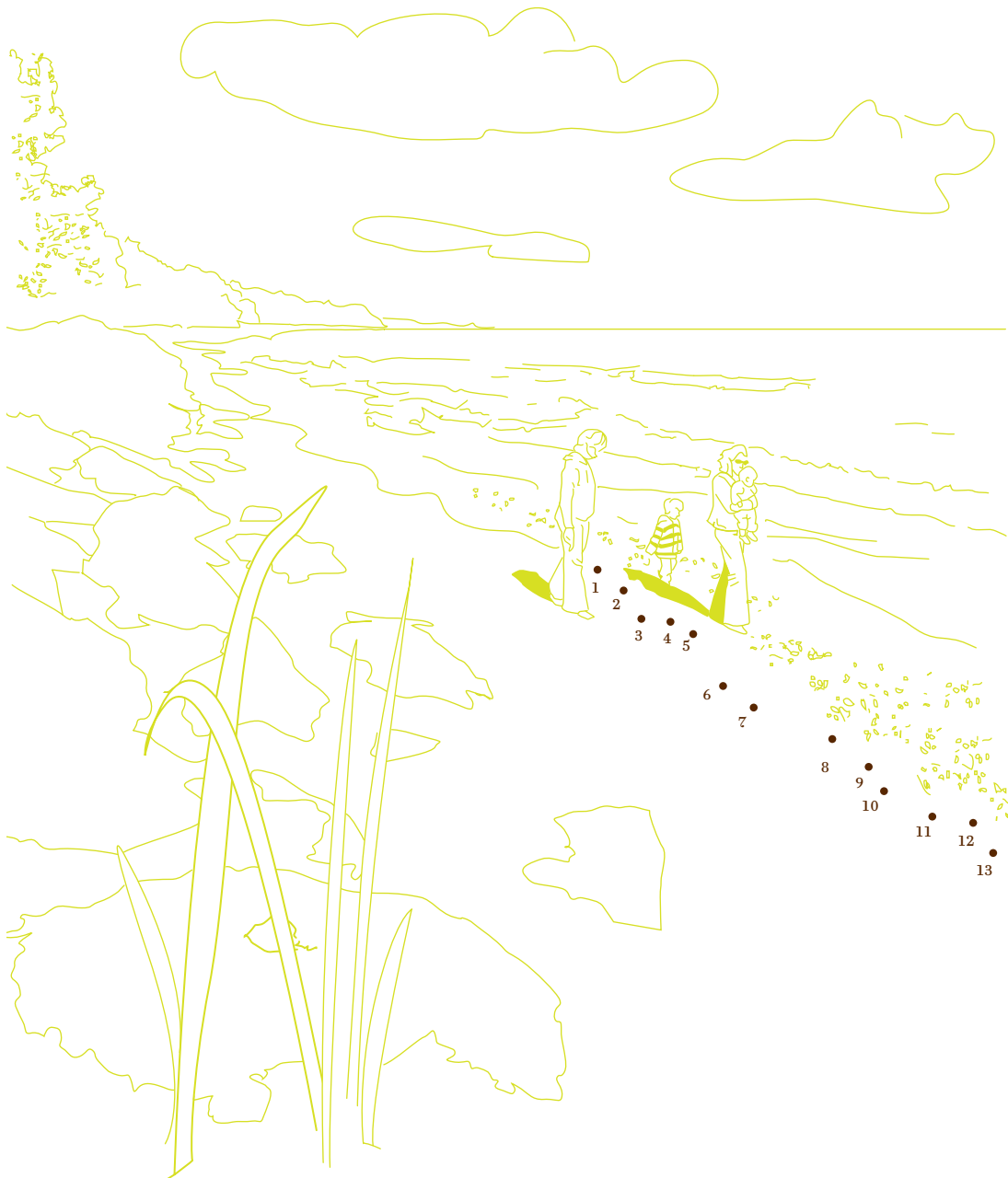


OPENLANDS

ANNUAL REPORT 2007



Knowing the importance of nature to the lives of all people and living things, Openlands creates, preserves, and enhances open space in northeastern Illinois and the surrounding region.



Dear Friends,

For 45 years, Openlands has been connecting people to the land. In fact, we believe that the two are inextricably linked. Open spaces help ensure cleaner air and water, as well as protect wildlife and natural communities. At the same time, access to these places helps balance and enrich our lives.

Openlands also connects the dots of a vibrant regional conservation picture. From inner-city gardens in Chicago to an extensive system of land and water corridors in three northwestern Indiana counties, our projects vary in size, scope, and location. Yet we always strive for an impact that is inclusive and enduring, balancing the inevitable growth of our region with the responsibility to protect natural resources and open spaces for future generations.

Beyond conserving land and waterways, Openlands conducts research and advocates for sound conservation policies. In the past year, for example, we generated momentum locally to create sensible statewide water-use policies. We also completed the Green Infrastructure Mapping Project, in partnership with the Center for Neighborhood Technology, providing a valuable tool that helps individuals and communities protect and care for their open spaces.

2007 also marks the solidifying of an internal partnership: CorLands will be marketed under the Openlands umbrella as Land Preservation.

In addition to these achievements, the stories that follow illustrate how we've honored our mission: Knowing the importance of nature to the lives of all people and living things, Openlands creates, preserves, and enhances open space in northeastern Illinois and the surrounding region.

These accounts are a testament to the dedication of our staff and many partners—the public, private, and individual collaborators who share our vision and give meaning to our work. They are also works in progress. That's why we encourage you to stay involved, connect the dots, and help us round out a picture of responsible regional conservation for many years to come.



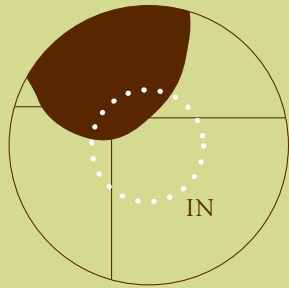
Nancy W. Sutherland

PRESIDENT
OPENLANDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Gerald W. Adelman

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OPENLANDS AND CORLANDS



NORTHWESTERN INDIANA
GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS PLAN

The northwestern Indiana landscape is vast and varied.

Shoreline dunes along Lake Michigan, oak savannas situated on the Valparaiso Moraine, and countless creeks and rivers afford both a respite from workaday life and a glimpse of the state's diverse ecosystems.

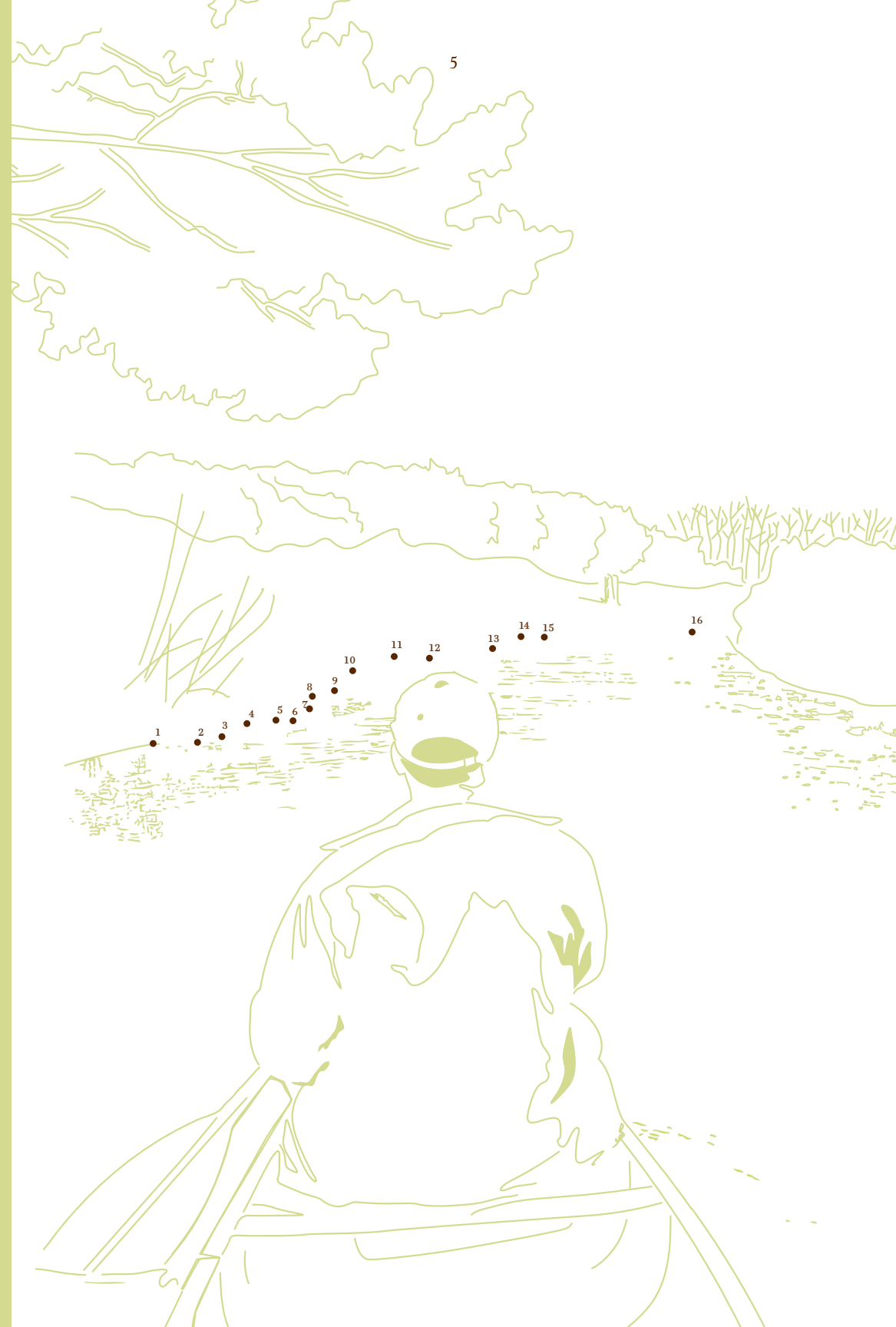
In 2007, Openlands and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) took an important step toward preserving these resources by recommending for protection an extensive system of land and water corridors throughout Lake, Porter, and La Porte counties. Formally adopted by the NIRPC executive board in December, the Northwestern Indiana Greenways and Blueways Plan culminates two years of rigorous groundwork by both entities.

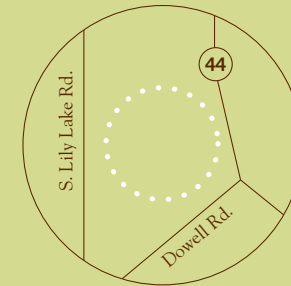
Unique to the plan is its treatment of a common problem, i.e., county and municipal park departments lack adequate

funding to implement proposed safeguards. To overcome this obstacle, Openlands and NIRPC will enlist the help of critical allies: private property owners.

Frequently, the assorted and sometimes conflicting interests of individual landholders can hinder comprehensive planning efforts. "We looked at this situation holistically and without too many preconceived notions," according to NIRPC executive director John Swanson. "And what we saw in each distinct land proprietor was a unique and untapped asset that could be brought together toward a common goal."

Today, the initiative appeals to neighbors and entire communities to fortify habitat corridors, maintain hydrological flows, and enhance plant and wildlife diversity—all indicators of a healthy greenways and blueways system.





BLACK CROWN MARSH

The state-endangered Black-crowned Night-Heron

(*Nycticorax nycticorax*), enjoyed a significant habitat increase in 2007, when a namesake marsh in Lake and McHenry counties grew by nearly 300 acres, thanks to Openlands.

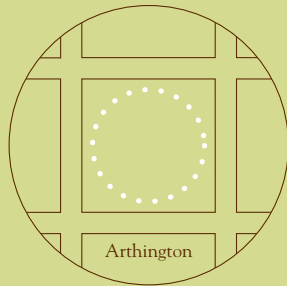
The expansion of Black Crown Marsh represents a twofold victory: the purchase not only protects a critical wetland area but also demonstrates the importance of partnerships in regional conservation efforts.

Straddling two counties with distinct governing bodies, the \$13 million tracts presented the possibility of a complicated transaction. But Openlands collaborated closely with the multiple sellers and buyers to negotiate terms and simplify the deal. Our involvement ultimately

led to a streamlined single closing for each owner through contracts assigned to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Lake County Forest Preserve District.

Current plans for the marsh include hiking and bike trails (the acquisition brings the 500-mile Grand Illinois Trail one step nearer completion), and, combined with nearby Moraine Hills State Park, the area provides over 3,000 acres of protected land for public enjoyment.

The acquisition also reduces the risk of fragmenting the wetland home of the Black-crowned Night-Heron, helping to ensure that generations to come will know this diminutive wading bird with distinctive, regal head feathers.



TREEKEEPERS AND COMMUNITY ARBORETUM

Betsy Elsaesser loves trees. And she's in good company;

poets and philosophers have extolled the virtues of oak and olive and fig for ages. But Betsy opted for pruning shears over the pen fifteen years ago, when she became one of the earliest Openlands TreeKeepers.

Comprised of an intensive seven-week curriculum, including hands-on instruction, written exams, and field tests, the TreeKeepers training program transforms people like Betsy into stewards of the urban forest. In fact, graduates of the program are the only volunteers in Chicago permitted to care for trees on city, park, and forest preserve land. As Jerome Scott, district forester for the Chicago Park District, explains, "Tree planting by these volunteers can rival any professional effort."

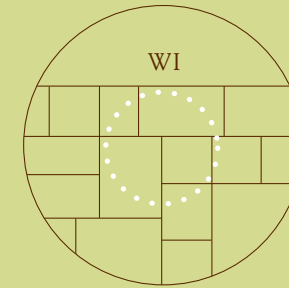
In 2007, Openlands achieved a major milestone: now, over 1,000 TreeKeepers (1,082 to be exact) prune and plant and advocate for best practices. According to

Betsy, being a TreeKeeper "has been a regular part of my life. I have learned so much, not only about trees but also about my city."

This year also marks the creation of Openlands' new outdoor education center for urban forestry, the Betty Swan Community Arboretum, named in honor of the community gardener who first saved and cultivated the space. Located on Chicago's West Side, the revitalized site contains a network of winding pathways and interpretive signs, and an innovative curriculum has been developed to help visiting students learn more about this unique urban oasis.

Openlands co-manages the arboretum with the North Lawndale Greening Committee, a community-based gardening group, while NeighborSpace holds the deed, ensuring permanent protection of the property.





FARMLAND PRESERVATION

The unique confluence of climate, topography, and

high-quality soils in northeastern Illinois renders some of the richest farmland *in the world*. Area agriculture is an important part of America's breadbasket, which feeds people across the globe. But it also provides benefits close to home, including fresh local foods, diverse wildlife habitats, and a robust cultural heritage.

However, extensive development jeopardizes farmland's continued vitality, and collar counties could permanently lose bountiful acres within just a generation.

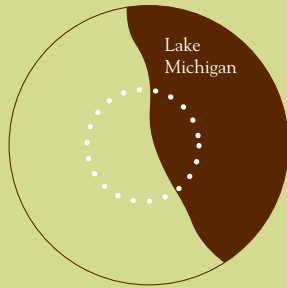
That's why, in 2007, Openlands worked with county boards in Boone, Kendall, and McHenry counties to cultivate farmland protection commissions—entities that can buy and hold conservation easements on farmland.

Openlands also lent technical assistance, analyzing land-use patterns to promote

opportunities for organic and specialty farming, exploring statutory authority and funding mechanisms, and developing a regional communication network for citizen groups, local governments, and farmers who want to preserve the agricultural legacy of their property.

Absent statewide farmland safeguards, we simultaneously drafted legislation to give counties authority to generate the revenues that make these programs successful.

"Collectively, we are stewards of this remarkable resource," says McHenry County Board chairman Ken Koehler of the cooperative effort to protect Illinois farmland. "And although there's a lot more work to be done, we won't be leaving soon for greener pastures—they're right here in front of us."



OPENLANDS LAKESHORE PRESERVE

Some plant species at the Openlands Lakeshore Preserve,

such as Buffalo Berry (*Shepherdia canadensis*) and Seaside Spurge (*Euphorbia polygonifolia*), closely resemble, and in some instances descend directly from, vegetation present when glaciers retreated nearly 10,000 years ago. These extraordinary flora, combined with rich wildlife habitat, exemplary bluffs, and exceptional ravine ecosystems, inspire our efforts to protect this rare locale.

Just over a year since Bartlett Ravine and a mile of Lake Michigan shoreline were transferred to Openlands, progress is perceptible at the preserve. Natural restoration work has begun, including pruning and removal of damaged and undesirable trees along the length of the ravine by expert arborists. Where appropriate, felled trees and limbs remain on the slopes to support bird and wildlife habitat,

and others will be reused to repair erosion gullies and washouts along the ravine.

Less noticeable activities have occurred too. In addition to hydrological and geological evaluations, we've conducted inventories of migratory birds and non-woody plants. Hewing closely to early ecological assessments, University of Illinois landscape architect Terry Harkness has drafted schematic designs for accessible bridges, overlooks, and trails. And development of an innovative interpretive plan that helps visitors enjoy the property's natural beauty nears completion. Outreach and educational forums with nearby homeowners have also begun.

Today, the preserve is well on its way to becoming a one-of-a-kind resource along Illinois' Lake Michigan shore and a tangible example of the work we do.



Buffalo Berry
(*Shepherdia canadensis*)

Thank you to the following corporations, foundations, individuals, and organizations who contributed so generously to our efforts from October 1, 2006, to September 30, 2007. Your support ensures a greener, healthier tomorrow.

We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this listing. However, if your name was omitted or there is an error in your listing, please contact the Development Office at 312-863-6273.

2007 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

October 1, 2006, to September 30, 2007

Openlands		CorLands	
.....			
Revenue		Revenue	
Contributions and Grants	\$ 1,310,783	Contributions and Grants	\$ 65,003
Program Income	977,635	Program Income	706,963
Investment Income	410,552	Investment Income	54,878
Special Events	151,705	Restricted Restoration Funds Released	832,608
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 2,850,675</u>	Total Revenue	<u>\$ 1,659,452</u>
Expenses		Expenses	
Program	\$ 2,062,369	Program	\$ 722,632
Management	167,861	Restoration	663,062
Fundraising	303,400	Management	150,139
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 2,533,630</u>	Total Expenses	<u>\$ 1,535,833</u>
Revenue over Expenses	<u>\$ 317,045</u>	Revenue over Expenses	<u>\$ 123,619</u>
Unrestricted net assets beginning of year	<u>\$ 262,131</u>	Unrestricted net assets beginning of year	<u>\$ 1,750,338</u>
Unrestricted net assets end of year	<u>\$ 579,176</u>	Unrestricted net assets end of year	<u>\$ 1,873,957</u>

CORPORATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

\$100,000 AND ABOVE

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
Hamill Family Foundation

\$50,000–99,999

Fidelity Foundation
Grand Victoria Foundation
Stanley Kleinstein Trust
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Old Republic International Corporation

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The Leadership Circle comprises individuals and organizations who contribute annual gifts of \$1,000 or more. Within the Leadership Circle, we also honor the members of the Gunnar Peterson Society who contribute gifts of \$2,500 or more. Openlands gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who have made greening and conservation a priority in their lives.

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