



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT AND ALDERMAN MITCHELL BREAK
GROUND ON THE PEDESTRIAN TRAIL AT MARIAN BYRNES PARK**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Chicago Park District and 7th Ward Alderman Greg Mitchell in Jeffery Manor to break ground on the pedestrian trail at Park #562 also known as Marian Byrnes Park. Additional habitat and wetland restoration is also underway to remove invasive species and plant native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.

"The new pedestrian trail and renovations to Marian Byrnes Park will provide Jeffrey Manor residents with a place to stay active and learn in Chicago's parks," said Mayor Emanuel. "Marian Byrnes Park will grow as a community anchor where even more families and children on the southeast side can experience nature."

The multi-use pedestrian trail is 1.35 miles long and winds through the woodland on the east side of the park once complete. The asphalt trail will be built with earthen shoulders on both sides. An adjacent planted swale will be built to capture stormwater and allow it to infiltrate into the soil.

"The development and revitalization of Marian Byrnes Park is a sign of what's to come in Jeffrey Manor," said Alderman Greg Mitchell 7th Ward. "This is an important investment for our children and families, and would not have happened without the hard work and dedication of our community."

Marian Byrnes Park, also referred to as Van Vlissingen Prairie, is approximately 142 acres and one of the largest natural areas in Chicago. The Park, which includes marsh, wet prairie, prairie, savanna, and woodland, is home to deer, birds, snakes and frogs.

"The development of the trail at Marian Byrnes Park will give community residents improved access to the park's natural area," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent Michael Kelly. "Upon completion, families and children can enjoy close encounters with surrounding habitats, plantings and wildlife. Through these investments, we hope to foster a respect and appreciation for our city's natural environment, especially among our youngest generation."

The park development project is supported by the Chicago Park District and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The new pedestrian trail is part of Mayor Emanuel's Building on Burnham plan to protect, preserve and invest in natural areas and recreational opportunities in neighborhoods across the city. Under this initiative, the Chicago Park District has committed to supporting 2,020 acres of designated natural areas by 2020. These spaces create invaluable habitats for migratory birds, rare plants and spawning fish and mussels. For Chicago residents, natural areas provide ample opportunities for recreation, stewardship and education about the region's unique natural environments.

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