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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ComEd and Openlands Provide Grants to Illinois Communities to Advance Clean-Green Environmental Projects**

*Green Region environmental grant program to fund 23 projects throughout ComEd service territory*

**CHICAGO** (July 16, 2015) – ComEd and Openlands today announced they are awarding almost \$200,000 in Green Region grants to 23 municipalities throughout northern Illinois to support their continuing efforts to conserve and protect open spaces. These grants help local municipalities facilitate environmental initiatives that otherwise would be sacrificed due to budget constraints.

This is the third year of the Green Region program in Illinois, a joint effort by ComEd and Openlands to fund municipal conservation and environmental projects. The Green Region grants are one of the ways ComEd and Openlands partner to give back to our communities and help them improve their green footprints. The grants subsidize existing open space projects at the municipal level focusing on conservation, preservation, protecting endangered species, and improvements to local parks and recreation resources. Each grant applicant was eligible for a maximum of \$10,000 per project.

“At ComEd, we are committed to doing all that we can to advance clean and green initiatives that help to protect the environment and communities now and into the future. Supporting our local communities who are doing great work to preserve and enhance our resources is a natural fit,” said Fidel Marquez, senior vice president of Governmental and External Affairs, ComEd. “We’re proud to partner with Openlands on this program and we congratulate the winning communities on their Green Region grants awards.”

Openlands, a Chicago-based nonprofit focused on land conservation, is administering the Green Region program. Municipalities throughout northern Illinois submitted their applications for a Green Region grant earlier this year. The applications were reviewed by an advisory committee of local environmental leaders selected by ComEd and Openlands.

“Working closely with partners like ComEd is vital to the work Openlands does to ensure that everyone in our region has access to nature,” said Openlands President and CEO Jerry Adelman. “The grants that are part of the Green Region program make it possible for projects throughout northern Illinois to move forward immediately, benefiting neighborhoods, communities, and ultimately all of us.”

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The grants will be distributed by ComEd over the next two years. Openlands will monitor the 23 projects by developing reports, guidelines and a scorecard to track and measure the impact of each project.

The 23 Green Region grant recipients for 2015 are:

- **City of Lake Forest**  
This is a collaborative restoration project to remove invasive plants along a popular, heavily-traveled 2.5-mile section of the Robert McClory Bike Bath in Lake Forest.
- **City of Sycamore**  
This project will connect the Peace Road Trail extension from the South Prairie Elementary School to the main trail next to Peace Road. This new connecting trail will allow safer access to the trail north of Prairie Drive on Peace Road, increasing the enjoyment of all who use the trail.
- **DeKalb County Forest Preserve District**  
This grant will assist the City of Genoa to connect Russell Woods Forest Preserve with a multi-use trail.
- **Forest Preserves of Cook County**  
This grant will allow the expansion of Hermitage Street Community Gardens so that more families can use allotment beds, and that a wide cross section of the community will be invested in the use of this open green space that employs environmental best practices.
- **Frankfort Square Park District**  
This project will allow the Frankfort Square Park District to expand public access into the Island Prairie Park wetlands by creating a boardwalk extension.
- **Homewood Flossmoor Park District**  
This project will provide funding for the planning, designing, surveying and permitting necessary to determine the best course of action to restore water filtration and quality to the Irons Oaks pond.
- **Kendall County Forest Preserve District**  
This project will establish approved management plans for Maramech Forest Preserve and Tucker-Millington Fen to implement enhanced natural area monitoring and restoration activities, with primary focus on removal of non-native species from core habitat areas.
- **Lee County**  
This project includes the design, fabrication and installation of one kiosk and 15 signs to help potential visitors find the 80-acre Headwaters property, orient themselves, and learn about its key natural and historic features.

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- **Lockport Township Park District**  
Dellwood Park West and the adjacent Lockport Prairie East contain rare dolomite prairie and sage meadow. The Lockport Township Park District and the Will County Forest Preserve District plan to collectively manage the site in an attempt to save the rare and Federally Endangered Species located at the site.
- **Richard Burton High School District – 157**  
This project will include the restoration of a 20-acre oak woodland complex that connects two fragmented woodlands, restoring a 160-acre oak woodland community.
- **Village of Diamond**  
The Village of Diamond is installing an 8-foot asphalt multi-use path with an 8-foot pre-fabricated bridge, lighting, and signage. A Boy Scout is doing his Eagle Scout Project which will include 2 wooden benches that will be installed adjacent to the bridge.
- **Village of Grant Park**  
This project will create a hill prairie and a natural playground learning environment that is safe, cognitively challenging, and utilizes native plants and natural elements to create a beautiful, sustainable, wildlife area with a low carbon footprint.
- **Village of Lemont**  
Heritage Quarries Recreation Area, situated along the historic I & M Canal in Lemont, offers visitors 100+ acres of nature to explore. This project will include installation of a boat dock on one of the Great Lakes Quarries as part of an ongoing effort to increase passive recreation opportunities.
- **Village of Midlothian**  
This project is a green infrastructure implementation project to increase community awareness of water quality Best Management Practices, providing water quality and aesthetic improvements along Midlothian Creek.
- **Village of Oakwood Hills**  
This project is part of a larger, 2-year project that will stabilize severe ecosystem degradation at the Oakwood Hills Fed Illinois State Nature Preserve.
- **Village of Villa Park**  
This project will allow the Village of Villa Park and its partners in the Grow Healthy Villa Park coalition to create a community garden on a vacant site and engage partners and residents in establishing an edible, teaching garden.
- **Channahon Park District**  
This grant will allow the Channahon Park District to develop the 56-acre wetland located adjacent to an existing park. Development will include trails, an interpretive boardwalk at a Native American Mound, an interpretive kiosk adjacent to a parking lot, and interpretive signage and benches.

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- **City of Woodstock**  
This grant will fund new wetlands walkways, will ensure the William C. Donato Conservation Area is a safe and accessible outdoor learning lab for Woodstock High School students, and is enjoyable for all park visitors.
- **Village of Wayne**  
This project will include the preservation of 38+ acres of undeveloped meadow for walking, horseback riding, bird watching and exercise of unleashed dogs, traversed by two creeks which for Norton Creek, a tributary to the Fox River.
- **Village of Orangeville**  
This project will involve the construction of an observation deck to enhance community interaction with the Village's restored wetland along the Jane Addams Trail.
- **Village of Poplar Grove**  
This project is a part of an ongoing effort to develop an accessible, passive-use park shelter adjacent to Long Prairie Trail. The shelter and path will be enjoyed by residents, cyclists, and recreational enthusiasts, and it will be used as a space for organized events, scouting, and community wide activities.
- **Village of Green Oaks**  
The Dennis A. Dorsey Conservation Area is a new restoration project focusing on a rare habitat that is globally imperiled – 12 acres of northern Flatwoods, oak savanna and vernal ponds to be restored by volunteer stewards and adjacent homeowners as a citizen model.
- **Chicago Park District – Independence Park**  
The Independence Park Teaching Garden is an applied approach to nutritional and biological sciences, reinforcing education for children enrolled in the summer day camp.

The Green Region grants will be presented to the 23 municipalities during a reception in Chicago this fall.

To date, ComEd has distributed nearly a half million dollars to open space projects in the Chicagoland area.

Additional information on the Green Region program can be found at [www.openlands.org/greenregion](http://www.openlands.org/greenregion).

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**About Openlands**

*Founded in 1963, Openlands is one of the nation's oldest and most successful metropolitan conservation organizations, having helped secure, protect, and provide public access to more than 55,000 acres of land for parks,*

forest preserves, wildlife refuges, land and water greenway corridors, and urban gardens. For more information, visit [www.openlands.org](http://www.openlands.org).

**About ComEd**

Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd) is a unit of Chicago-based Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation's leading competitive energy provider, with approximately 7.8 million customers. ComEd provides service to approximately 3.8 million customers across northern Illinois, or 70 percent of the state's population. For more information visit [ComEd.com](http://ComEd.com), and connect with the company on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.