

Urban Oasis Opens at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo

Thursday, July 15, 2010, 5 p.m. EDT

The Nature Boardwalk at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago unveiled a new urban oasis in late June. Educational programming is a key feature of the pond ecosystem experience.

Switch grass, milkweed, sunflowers, goldenrod, purple corn flower, water willow and other prairie and wetland vegetation indigenous to the region spans the 14-acre space and surrounds the pond. The plants provide wildlife habitat as well as serve a crucial environmental role as a natural filtration system that maintains the pond's healthy water quality, according to Lincoln Park Zoo.

Lincoln Park Zoo will reintroduce painted turtles to the area later this year, joining other species such as frogs, birds and mammals. Biologists plan to conduct wildlife surveillance and study the health of the wildlife and plant populations to ensure sustainability of the habitat.